



Positive Emotional Development and Learning Skills Initiative

Summary Evaluation Report

December 2014

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Executive Summary

IN 2012, the Health Foundation for Western and Central New York (HFWCNY) and The Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation commissioned Harder+Company Community Research to evaluate PEDALS: Positive Emotional Development and Learning Skills, a multi-year initiative designed to improve the social and emotional well-being of children.

PEDALS introduced evidence-based curricula and quality improvement methods to 144 preschool teachers, teacher assistants, and administrators in 14 sites across Erie and Niagara Counties. Overall, PEDALS served more than 150 children in 48 different preschool classrooms spread across eight grantee organizations.

The three complementary strategies that make up the design of PEDALS are as follows:

Social-Emotional Curricula. Each grantee elected to receive training in one of two evidence-based social-emotional curricula:

Second Step: Social-Emotional Skills for Early Learning is a universal, classroom-based program designed to increase children's school readiness and social success by building social-emotional competence and self-regulation skills.

PATHS: Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies curriculum is a comprehensive program for promoting emotional and social competencies and reducing aggression and behavior problems in elementary school-aged children.

Coaching Support: Teachers, administrators, and other staff received tailored support from an expert

coaching team. Every PEDALS classroom was assigned an Early Childhood (EC) Coach and a Quality Improvement (QI) Coach. EC coaches visited each school once or twice a month for two hours at a time to support teachers with curriculum implementation and administration of the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA). QI coaches had phone conferences with administrators once per month to review child assessment data. Coaching support also provided general classroom management help.

Child Assessment: To measure progress toward improved social and emotional skills in children as well as offer strategies to help strengthen these social and emotional areas, participating classrooms used the DECA tool in conjunction with their chosen curriculum. All children participating in PEDALS received a DECA assessment at the beginning of the school year, mid-way through the year, and at the end of the year to identify and track their development before and after exposure to the curriculum.

This report presents findings from the two years of PEDALS, looking at both implementation and outcomes. The following executive summary includes a high-level summary of the report by evaluation question.

How well implemented was PEDALS overall?

Training quality. Teachers, administrators, and coaches were satisfied with both the curriculum trainings and DECA trainings. Teachers felt

confident in their ability to administer the curriculum and properly use the DECA in their classrooms.

Implementation of PEDALS. Findings from multiple data sources suggest that PEDALS was well implemented overall. The majority of those trained were able to successfully apply either the Second Step or PATHS curriculum in their classrooms. Ninety-two percent of teachers felt that the curriculum used was appropriate for the students served at their school. Additionally, teachers, administrators, and coaches reported that the DECA was straightforward and easy to administer in the classroom.

There was some initial variation in fidelity among the two different curriculums; Second Step teachers were able to implement the curriculum more effectively than PATHS teachers. The PATHS curriculum recommends that the lessons be taught two to three times a week for twenty to thirty minutes at a time. Yet, over half (55 percent) of the PATHS teachers reported teaching the lessons only once per week for 10-19 minutes. Second Step teachers, on the other hand, were more successful in adhering to the recommended curriculum dose. The majority (82 percent) of the Second Step teachers reported that they taught the weekly theme cards activities five to ten minutes per day as recommended by the program as well as implementing the brain builder games two to three times per week.

Coaches followed up with PATHS teachers following these initial findings to ensure fidelity to curriculum guidelines. By the time of the follow-up, most teachers were implementing the curriculum with fidelity. Three-quarters (75 percent) of the PATHS teachers reported teaching the lessons every day for 10-19 minutes, which is more than the recommended time allotment.

Moreover, the majority of PATHS and Second Step teachers (96 percent) reported that they were very or extremely satisfied with the coaching they received. Ninety-one percent of PATHS and 97 percent of Second Step teachers strongly agreed or

agreed that the coaching support gave them confidence in implementing the curriculum in their classroom.

Challenges. Despite successes, some challenges were encountered during implementation, as one might expect with a new program. First, teachers reported difficulty acquiring necessary program materials, such as the recommended books and CD players. Additional challenges noted by evaluation participants included:

- Ensuring new and substitute teachers were trained and prepared to implement the curriculum;
- Understanding that the curriculum might not be appropriate for higher-needs students with developmental delays;
- Ensuring consistency of curriculum activities across classrooms; and
- Using curriculum with children who spoke languages other than English.

What was the value of different program components, and what changes resulted from PEDALS?

Program Quality. Almost all (90 percent) Second Step and PATHS teachers rated their experience with the quality of the PEDALS program as excellent or good. Based on their experiences, 88 percent of Second Step and PATHS teachers think there is a high need for a program like PEDALS in the communities like the ones they serve. Both administrators and coaches corroborated these findings expressing a definite need for PEDALS.

Value of Curriculum. Overall, teachers reported the curriculum helpful in improving both student behavior and their social and emotional development. Almost all (90 percent) Second Step and PATHS teachers reported that they found the curriculum very or fairly helpful in improving the behavior of students in their classroom(s). When looking at helpfulness of the curriculum in improving student social and emotional

development, 93 percent of Second Step and PATHS teachers reported the curriculum to be very or fairly helpful. All administrators agreed that they observed differences in how teachers and staff in the classrooms interacted with the students after the implementation of PEDALS.

Usefulness of DECA. Almost all teachers (95 percent) reported that the DECA information was useful for supporting the social and emotional development of students served at their school. Another 90 percent of these teachers strongly agreed or agreed they learned new or different things about the children they served from using the DECA.

Coaching Experience. All (100%) Second Step and PATHS teachers strongly agreed or agreed that PEDALS coaching support gave them confidence in implementing the curriculum in their classroom(s). Also, another 90% reported being extremely or very confident in their ability to continue using the Second Step or PATHS curriculum in the future without the coaching support offered through PEDALS. When asked to report on their best and least favorite part of coaching, almost three-quarters of Second Step and PATHS teachers (73%) reported that the best part of coaching was the extra support and advice provided in the classroom.

Child Outcomes. In conjunction with determining the value of PEDALS, our evaluation measured actual progress toward improved social and emotional skills in children. We found that students exhibited improved protective factor scores over time. Research has demonstrated that the possession of protective factors can buffer the negative effects of adversity and stress and lead to positive outcomes.¹ There was a statistically significant improvement in students' scores, from year one baseline to year two post, in the initiative, self-control, attachment, and total protective factor domains. Additionally, there was a statistically significant improvement in students' scores, from

year 1 baseline to year 2 baseline, in the initiative, self-control, and total protective factor domains.

Nationally, an average of 16 percent of children score within the "strength" category, 16 percent score within "need," and 68 percent score "typical" on protective factors. At year 1 baseline, PEDALS students demonstrated lower-than-average social-emotional protective factor scores: merely 5 percent scored "strength" while 28 percent scored "need." However, at the end of year 2 of PEDALS implementation, 30 percent scored "strength" and 8 percent a "need," showing that these children actually moved ahead of the national average in each of these categories.

Unlike the protective factor scores, PEDALS students' behavior concern scores remained fairly consistent – and consistent with national averages – from year 1 baseline through year 2 baseline to post. For behavior concerns, nationally, on average, 82 percent of children score within the "typical" category and 18 percent score "need." At year 1 baseline, 83 percent of the PEDALS students scored "typical" and 17 percent "need." Likewise, at the end of year 2, 79 percent scored "typical" and 21 percent a "need," showing that these children were scoring very similarly to the national average over time.

Aligning with these DECA findings, all interviewed administrators stated that PEDALS helped improve the social and emotional development of their students. Additionally, even though DECA behavior concern scores remained fairly consistent across the two years, all administrators, including almost all teachers (90 percent) thought PEDALS improved student behavior.

What did evaluation findings suggest about how to improve services?

An important aspect of this evaluation was the real-time use of findings to help improve services while the initiative was being implemented. For instance, databooks, slide decks, and verbal updates on interim findings were provided to Foundation staff as data were being collected and analyzed. The

¹ Werner, E.E., & Smith, R. S. (1982). *Vulnerable but invincible: A longitudinal study of resilient children and youth*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

findings highlighted below are based on study completion and are relevant to future program plans.

Program Recommendations. While teachers, administrators, and coaches rated the PEDALS program highly, they also identified opportunities for improvement. Recommendations by participant group included:

- *Teachers identified that elements of the curricula may be better suited for three-year olds than four-year olds and vice versa. Foundations could look into additional age-specific curricula.*
- *Administrators proposed creating an online forum where teachers can collectively recommend books and other resources for specific curriculum lessons.*
- *Coaches recommended providing more opportunities for teachers to share successes/challenges, possibly incorporating PEDALS initiative updates in monthly staff meetings.*

Sustainability of PEDALS. All (100 percent) Second Step and PATHS teachers reported that they will continue using the curriculum in their classroom after PEDALS is completed. Seven of the eight administrators gave a definite yes when asked whether or not they plan to continue with the curriculum after PEDALS ends. The one administrator who was not a definite yes stated, "We are looking at it. It needs to be approved by our board, but we would like to continue it." When looking even further into the future, another 81 percent of teachers reported being extremely or very likely to still be implementing the Second Step/PATHS curriculum in 5 years. Administrators, however, were less confident about DECA continuation. Three administrators reported they would continue to use the DECA assessment following PEDALS. The other five were unsure, expressing either financial uncertainties or Executive Director and board approval as obstacles.

Overall, in accordance with the teachers and administrators, all seven coaches were hopeful that the PEDALS program would be sustained. Both administrators and coaches identified potential challenges to sustainability. These included:

- Administrator or director buy-in;
- Funding (including need for any additional kits and/or wear and tear of materials); and
- Teacher turnover and the time and expenses required to train new teachers.

Concluding Thoughts

Through PEDALS, HFWCNY and The Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation successfully introduced evidence-based curricula, child assessment, and quality improvement methods to preschool providers in Erie and Niagara Counties. During the evaluation period, PEDALS made significant strides toward improving the social and emotional well-being of children living in western and central New York. These included:

- Teachers confirmed that the PEDALS trainings gave them confidence to implement both the PATHS and Second Step curriculum and the DECA in their classrooms.
- According to teachers and administrators, both the PATHS and Second Step curriculum were very easy to integrate into existing teaching and lesson plans. Teachers reported that the curriculum was appropriate for the students served at their school. Administrators reported that PEDALS gave teachers new tools for classroom management and student engagement.
- Teachers reported that they were extremely or very satisfied with the coaching they received through PEDALS.

- Teachers, administrators, and coaches generally found the DECA easy to use and useful. However, several sites were uncertain whether they would continue to use this tool in the future.
- After implementation of PEDALS, teachers reported that the curriculum was helpful in improving both student behavior and social and emotional development. Additionally, teachers reported that the DECA information was useful for supporting the social and emotional development of students served at their school.
- DECA scores showed statistically significant improvements in student protective factor scores including the initiative, self-control, attachment and total protective factor domains from year one baseline to year two follow-up. When looking specifically at behavior concerns, these scores remained fairly consistent across years with slight declines from year one baseline to year two follow-up.
- Almost all teachers rated their experience with the quality of the PEDALS program as excellent or good. All teachers and almost all administrators reported that they will continue using the Second Step or PATHS curriculum in their classrooms after PEDALS is completed.

Overall, the findings of this evaluation suggest that PEDALS was well-implemented and had a positive influence on the social and emotional well-being of children in upstate New York.

I. INTRODUCTION

The first five years of a child's life are critical to a child's development, shaping his/her success in school and life. Yet nationally, less than 10 percent of public investments in education and development are spent on children in this age range.² To help prepare young children emotionally and socially for kindergarten, the Health Foundation for Western and Central New York (HFWCNY) and The Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation partnered to create PEDALS: Positive Emotional Development and Learning Skills in 2012.

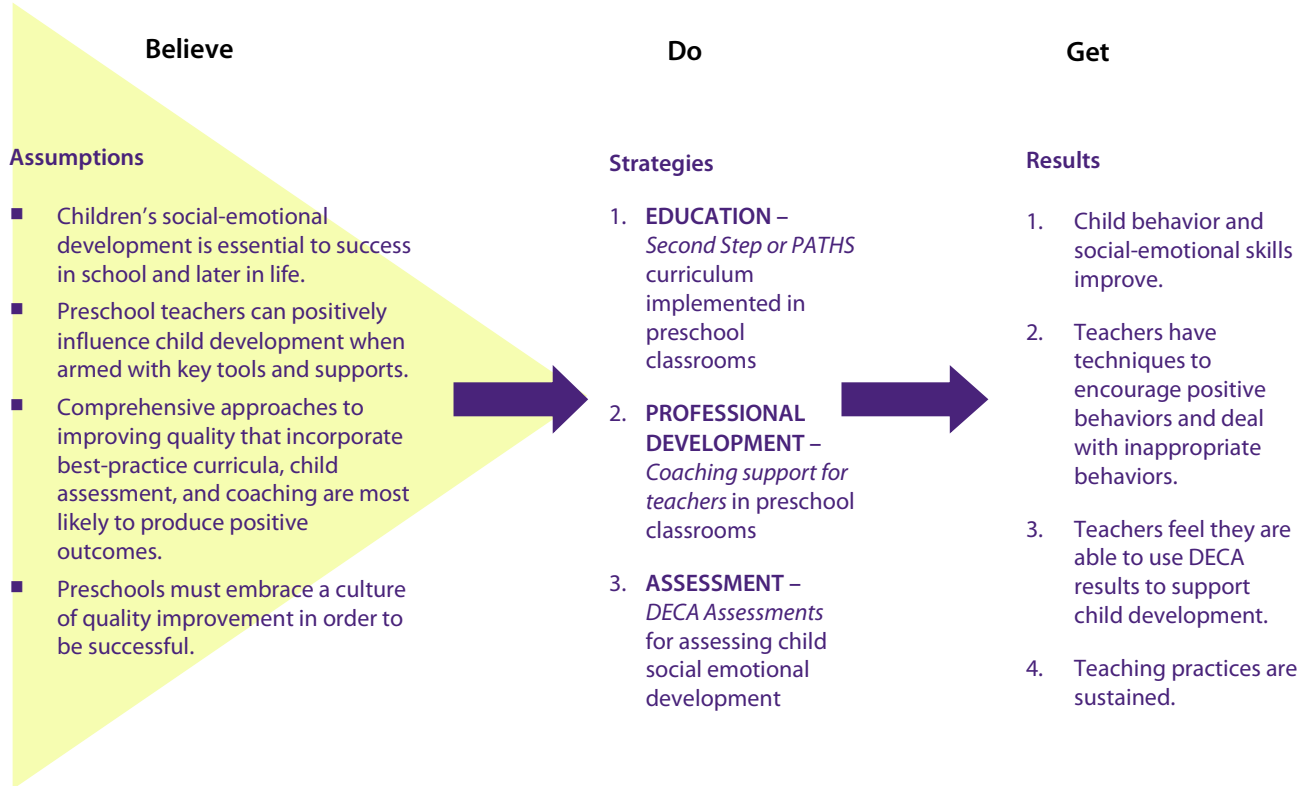
A two-year program, PEDALS introduced evidence-based curricula and quality improvement methods to preschool providers in fourteen key sites across Erie and Niagara Counties. PEDALS served more than 150 children in 48 different preschool classrooms spread across eight grantee organizations. HFWCNY and The Tower Foundation commissioned Harder+Company Community Research to evaluate PEDALS to find out what worked well, what could be improved, and ultimately, whether PEDALS helped improve the social and emotional well-being of children.

The theory of change for the initiative depicts the design of PEDALS. It highlights three complementary strategies, as illustrated in Exhibit 1:

1. Social-Emotional Curricula, an evidence-based social-emotional curriculum (Second Step or Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)) implemented in preschool classrooms (Education)
2. Coaching Support (Professional Development)
3. Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA), a tool for assessing child development (Assessment)

² National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. Washington D.C.: National Academy Press, Shonkoff, J. P. & Phillips, D.A. (eds.).

Exhibit 1. PEDALS Theory of Change



Key PEDALS Strategies

The focus of this report is to understand the impacts of the three key strategy areas.

Social-Emotional Curricula: Each grantee selected to participate in PEDALS elected to receive training in one of two evidence-based social-emotional curriculums (see Exhibit 2):

- Second Step: *Social-Emotional Skills for Early Learning*** is a universal, classroom-based program designed to increase children’s school readiness and social success by building social-emotional competence and self-regulation skills. It is designed specifically for multiple-age, early learning classrooms. The program is taught through 28 weekly themes that include five-to seven-minute activities to be taught throughout the week. The Second Step early learning program teaches self-regulation and executive-function skills that help children learn skills to manage their feelings, make friends, and solve problems. Activities, Brain Builder games, and small-group work keep children engaged and help them practice their skills. Boy and Girl puppets encourage participation.

- PATHS: Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies** curriculum is a comprehensive program for promoting emotional and social competencies and reducing aggression and behavior problems in elementary school-aged children while simultaneously enhancing the educational process in the classroom. This innovative curriculum is designed to be used by educators and counselors in a multi-year, universal prevention model. Although primarily focused on the school and classroom settings, information and activities are also included for use with parents. The PATHS program is designed to be taught two or more times per week for a minimum of 20-30 minutes per day. Systematic, developmentally-based lessons, materials, and instructions are provided to facilitate emotional literacy, self-control, social competence, positive peer relations, and interpersonal problem-solving skills. Key objectives in promoting these developmental skills are to prevent and to reduce behavioral and emotional problems.

Exhibit 2. PEDALS Grantees

Grantee	City	Curriculum
The Belle Center	Buffalo, NY	Second Step
Bethel Head Start	Buffalo and Cheektowaga, NY	Second Step
Children’s Day Out Educational Center	Buffalo, NY	Second Step
Holy Cross Head Start	Buffalo and Akron, NY	Second Step
Creative Play Learning Center (formerly Kids World)	Getzville, NY	PATHS
LaSalle Early Childhood Center	Niagara Falls, NY	Second Step
Little Lambs Child Care Center	Lockport, NY	Second Step
Seneca Nation of Indians Head Start	Irving, NY	PATHS

Coaching Support: Teachers, administrators, and other staff received tailored support from an expert coaching team. Coaches helped coordinate opportunities to share successes and lessons learned across all PEDALS participants and promote the creation of learning networks among early childhood educators.

Every PEDALS classroom had two coaches assigned. This included an Early Childhood (EC) Coach and a Quality Improvement (QI) Coach. The EC coaches were experts in early childhood and were the main point of contact for the classroom teachers/staff. They visited each classroom once or twice a month for two hours at a time, and worked directly with teachers/staff to assist with implementing the curriculum, DECA, etc. These sessions provided teachers with the opportunity to ask questions and helped to ensure they were adhering to the program model. The QI coaches were experts in collecting, interpreting, and using data. They worked closely with each EC coach and site administrator to track program progress and impact over time.

DECA: To measure progress toward improved social and emotional skills in children, participating classrooms used the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) tool in conjunction with their chosen curriculum. The DECA is a nationally-normed assessment that evaluates the frequency of 27 positive behaviors (strengths) exhibited by preschoolers aged two to five. The DECA also contains a 10-item behavioral concerns screener. This tool was used to create a baseline of the social-emotional status of children in each classroom and then re-administered periodically to track and assess changes. All children participating in PEDALS received a DECA assessment at the beginning of the school year, mid-way through the year, and at the end of the year to identify and track their development before and after exposure to the curriculum.

Evaluation Approach

This evaluation examined implementation of PEDALS beginning in September 2012 with initial curriculum and DECA training and through the end of the 2013-14 school year. The evaluation had three primary goals: (a) to provide HFWCNY, The Tower Foundation, and PEDALS grantees with information to *improve program implementation* and promote learning, (b) to *document key outcomes and accomplishments* of the initiative as a whole and of its individual components, and (c) to *identify lessons learned* that are relevant to HFWCNY, The Tower Foundation, and other stakeholders interested in improving child social-emotional skills. The primary questions that guided this evaluation were:

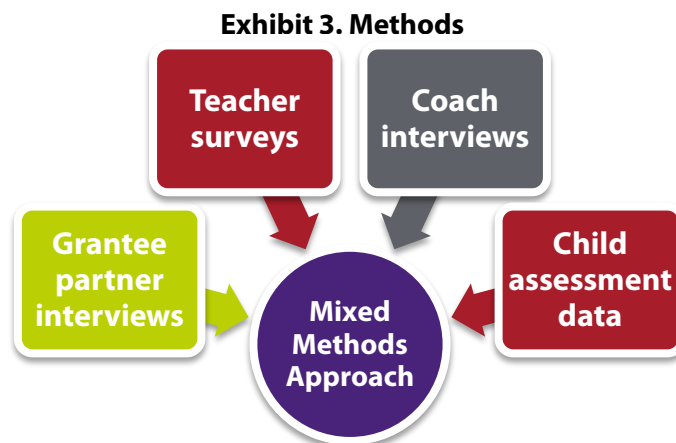
1. *Implementation*: Are teachers able to implement the curriculum in their classrooms? Are teachers able to assess the social-emotional status of children in each classroom? Are preschool classrooms maintaining fidelity to the curricula?
2. *Achieving Outcomes*: Does the assessment demonstrate measureable improvement in social and emotional well-being of children from baseline? Are grantees and individual preschool classrooms able to use DECA data for program improvement? To what extent does coaching support fidelity to the curricula and assessment? What other factors enable or constrain provider success?
3. *Lessons Learned*: How sustainable are the gains achieved from the use of classroom curricula and assessments? What would teachers suggest to Foundation staff if the Foundations were to implement PEDALS again with different grantees?

Methodology

The PEDALS evaluation used a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data. Data collection included: (1) interviews with school administrators, (2) surveys with teachers, (3) coach interviews, (4) child assessment (DECA data), and (5) participation in community learning opportunities as appropriate (Exhibit 3).

Administrator Interviews. The evaluation team conducted in-depth, semi-structured telephone interviews with site administrators (n=8) at each grantee organization in early spring 2013. This allowed for a benchmark of initial expectations for implementation of the curriculum. The interview protocols addressed topics such as preschool population and organizational characteristics, curriculum selection and mastery of key concepts, satisfaction with training and coaching, teacher buy-in, implementation challenges, and facilitating factors. In order to make comparisons against these initial findings and assessments against actual results, follow-up interviews took place in winter 2014.

Teacher Surveys. The evaluation team worked with grantees to conduct a baseline survey of participating early childhood education (ECE) teachers to examine curricular and assessment understanding and implementation. Surveys were initially administered to all participating ECE teachers directly following initial training. The



questionnaires gathered information with respect to participant reactions regarding the relevance, comprehensibility, and comprehensiveness of the curriculum and assessment approach; learning or degree to which participants mastered the intended content; and intent to apply these approaches in the classroom. Additional follow-up surveys were conducted midway through year 1, at the end of year 1, and the following school year. The purpose of these surveys was to assess program satisfaction, implementation, and fidelity over time.

Coach Interviews. We conducted interviews with coaches to obtain their perspective on the progress of each site in light of their organizational background, community context, and teacher education and experience. Interviews took place midway through the program (summer 2013) to understand progress to date. The interviews examined the nature of the coaching process, support for quality measurement, and strategies for supporting learning and sharing among grantees.

Child Assessment Data. We analyzed child assessment data collected by each of the grantees, adhering closely to the scoring instructions provided in the assessment guidance documents. The PEDALS classroom teachers rated each child using the DECA assessment at six points (time point 1-6 or T1-6) over two school years; once at the very beginning of each school year, a second time mid-way through the school year, and a final assessment at the end of each school year.

Observation of community learning opportunities. Harder+Company participated in key community learning opportunities as appropriate which mainly included cross-site, grantee webinars.

As with any evaluation, certain study limitations must be considered:

- **Social desirability may introduce positive bias.** Both interview and survey data collection involved initiative participants reporting on their own organizations and activities. Self-reported data of this nature has inherent limitations. Although participants (administrators, teachers, and coaches) provided insider perspectives and insights valuable to this evaluation, their perspectives cannot be completely objective, and may have been influenced by social desirability bias (the inclination to provide what they saw as expected or favorable responses).
- **Findings may not be generalizable to the overall population of preschools in western and central New York.** Findings provide a snapshot of progress in an evolving environment. Understanding that data were obtained from only eight grantee organizations, caution should be taken when generalizing as it may not be directly comparable to all preschools given differences in preschool populations across sites and settings.

Despite these limitations, the evaluation team believes that the evaluation provides important insights, findings, and lessons learned regarding the success of PEDALS.

Organization of Report

This report is organized as follows:

- **Implementation:** Quality of curriculum training and DECA training and initial implementation of PEDALS. Data that speak to the quality of implementation—teachers satisfaction with the trainings, knowledge attainment, confidence moving forward, and fidelity to the curricula.

- + **Outcomes: PEDALS Impact.** Results that speak to the value of PEDALS program components and overall impact of PEDALS.
- + **Lessons Learned.** Lessons learned regarding sustainability of PEDALS.
- + **Concluding Thoughts.** Final thoughts on the success of the PEDALS.

II. Implementation: Quality of Training and Initial Implementation of PEDALS

Before assessing the outcomes of PEDALS, it is important to first assess the extent to which the program was well implemented and matched the PEDALS model. This chapter of the report assesses the quality of *trainings* and the ability to successfully implement PEDALS curriculum and DECA in preschool classrooms. As detailed below, the findings suggest that PEDALS was well implemented overall.

Curriculum Trainings

In order for the PEDALS trainings to be effective, teachers need to *develop knowledge* of the chosen socio-emotional curriculum and *gain the skills and tools* to implement this curriculum successfully. Teachers and other PEDALS program staff, representing the eight PEDALS grantee sites, participated in trainings for the PATHS and Second Step curriculum prior to its implementation in classrooms. One training was conducted for PATHS and multiple trainings were conducted for Second Step. Surveys were distributed to participants at all trainings. The survey response rate for all trainings was 100 percent (22 PATHS attendees and 122 Second Step attendees, respectively).

This baseline curriculum training survey captured teacher satisfaction with the trainings and knowledge and confidence in being able to administer the curriculum. The baseline teacher survey data yielded a few key themes:

Satisfaction with trainings and trainers. Overall, attendees rated both the trainings and trainers favorably. Everyone rated the quality of the curricula, training activities, materials and handouts, and their overall satisfaction with the trainings as good or excellent. Trainer ratings were overwhelming positive as well. With the exception of two Second Step training attendees, all others rated their trainer as good or very good.

Confidence to administer the programs. Most attendees (85 percent) reported they were very or extremely confident in their ability to implement the program in their classrooms. More specifically, 90 percent of Second Step attendees reported feeling very or extremely confident, while 84 percent of PATHS attendees reported this confidence (Exhibit 4).

Exhibit 4: Confidence in the Ability to Implement the Program in Classrooms*

	Second Step (n=118)	PATHS (n=19)	Overall (n=137)
Grantee Staff (n=129)	4.04	3.94	4.03
Other** (n=8)	4.33	4.00	4.25
Overall (n=137)	4.06	3.95	4.04

*These numbers represent the mean rating based on a 5-point scale, with 5 being "extremely confident" and 1 "not at all confident" in respondents' ability to implement the PATHS or Second Step curriculum in classrooms.

**Coaches and representatives from Erie Regional and Monarch (social worker).

Findings from the administrator interviews were consistent with these teacher survey baseline findings. All six Second Step administrators commented that the curriculum training was very good. They reported that the

training was thorough and adequately prepared their staff to implement Second Step successfully. The two PATHS administrators were slightly less satisfied; one administrator reported that the training provided the tools that were needed for implementation, while the other respondent felt that the training only provided about 70 percent of the necessary information.

Additionally, the coach interviews also yielded positive curriculum implementation responses. All four QI coaches as well as the three EC coaches reported that the teachers were very successful in using the curriculum. As one EC coach added, *“They have really taken to it so well. They are all very motivated. The curriculum is easy to follow and teachers are seeing results in the class. I have even witnessed kids using the language and calming techniques.”*

DECA Trainings

DECA trainings were administered to teachers and other PEDALS program staff both in-person and via webinar. The survey response rate for the in-person training was 100 percent (24 attendees) and 58 percent (18 attendees) for the webinar trainings. Key findings from this baseline survey included:

Overall satisfaction with the training. Feedback from attendees was positive overall. Attendees highlighted the trainer; visuals, demonstrations, and use of technology; handouts; and the interactive format as key aspects of the training.

Confidence to administer the DECA. Although teachers from the in-person training and webinar reported feeling confident overall in their ability to use the DECA, teachers who attended the in-person training felt slightly more confident in properly administering the DECA to conduct student assessments than those who

Exhibit 5: Ability to Properly use the DECA to Conduct Student Assessments*

	In-Person (n=23)	Webinar (n=18)	Overall (n=41)
Grantee Staff	4.16	3.87	4.03
Other**	4.25	4.33	4.29
Overall	4.17	3.94	4.07

**These numbers represent the mean rating based on a 5-point scale, with 5 being “extremely confident” and 1 “not at all confident” in respondents’ ability to properly use the DECA to conduct student assessments.*

***Coaches and Tower Foundation staff.*

attended the webinar (Exhibit 5)

Similarly to the curriculum training, findings from both the administrator and coach interviews were consistent with these teacher survey baseline findings. Both administrators and coaches felt that the DECA training provided sufficient preparation for the teachers to administer and use the DECA. Many administrators also suggested that an in-person training in addition to or in place of the webinar provides for more hands-on experience allowing for even more clarity around implementing the assessment. All seven coaches reported the DECA training adequately prepared teachers to administer the tool.

Initial PEDALS Implementation

Results have shown that teachers were satisfied with the trainings and felt confident in moving forward with PEDALS. A few months after grantees participated in curricula and DECA trainings (i.e., in winter 2013), Harder+Company Community Research followed up with teachers, administrators, and coaches to assess their initial experiences implementing the curricula in their classrooms, administering and using the DECA, and receiving coaching support. Overall, there were high levels of satisfaction with PEDALS; however, early findings pointed to the need to ensure program quality for PATHS grantees.

Curricula

Findings from the teacher survey, administrator, and coach interviews suggested that overall, the feedback regarding the implementation of curricula was very positive. Nearly all teachers (97 percent) rated their overall experience applying the curriculum in their classroom as very good or good (Exhibit 6). Another 92 percent felt that the curriculum used was appropriate for the students served at their school (Exhibit 7). All administrators reported their teachers greatly enjoyed implementing PEDALS curricula, and that the curriculum fits the needs of the children they serve. Administrators indicated that PEDALS gave teachers additional tools useful in managing the classroom and engaging with both students and parents. They reported both curriculums to be well scripted and easy to follow.

Exhibit 6: Experience Applying the Curriculum*

How would you rate your overall experience applying the curriculum in your classroom?	
Second Step (n=34)	3.74
PATHS (n=11)	3.55
Overall (n=45)	3.69

**Mean ratings are based on a 4-point scale, with 4 being "very good" and 1 "poor."*

Exhibit 7: Appropriateness of the Curriculum*

To what extent do you think the curriculum is appropriate for the students served at your school?	
Second Step (n=34)	3.29
PATHS (n=11)	3.18
Overall (n=45)	3.27

**Mean ratings are based on a 4-point scale, with 4 being "extremely appropriate" and 1 "not at all appropriate."*

The evaluation also included an assessment of teachers' fidelity to the curricula. When asked to identify the things about the PEDALS program that made it relatively easy or relatively challenging to implement, teachers, administrators, and coaches responded as follows:

PATHS

Initially, over half (55 percent) of the PATHS teachers reported teaching the lessons only once per week for 10-19 minutes. The PATHS curriculum recommends that the lessons be taught two to three times a week for twenty to thirty minutes at a time. Therefore, 82 percent of PATHS teachers were adhering to the curriculum dose less than recommended (Exhibit 8 and 9). Coaches followed up with teachers after initial findings to ensure fidelity to curriculum guidelines. By follow-up, most PATHS teachers were implementing the curriculum with fidelity. Three-quarters (75 percent) of the PATHS teachers reported teaching the lessons every day for 10-19 minutes, which is more than recommended.

Exhibit 8: Adherence to the Recommended Curriculum Dose * (n=8)

Frequency of lessons taught	
1 time each week for 10-19 minutes	6 (55%)
1 time each week for 20-30 minutes	1 (9%)
1-2 times each week for 10-19 minutes	1 (9%)
2-3 times per week for 10-19 minutes	1 (9%)
2-3 times per week for 20-30 minutes	0 (0%)
Every day for 10-19 minutes	1 (9%)
Every day for 10-30 minutes	1 (9%)

Exhibit 9: Adherence to the Recommended Curriculum Dose (n=9)

Length of lessons taught	
Recommended Amount	0 (0%)
Less than Recommended	9 (82%)
More than Recommended	2 (18%)

**Recommended dosage for the PATHS curriculum is 2-3 times per week for 20-30 minutes per day.*

With this said, PATHS teachers reported that students seemed to respond well to the curriculum. Additionally, both PATHS administrators reported they were extremely pleased with the curriculum. They reported that the lesson plans were always interesting and entertaining. Additionally, according to one QI coach,

“The teachers enjoyed using it. They found it very valuable. There are pre-planned activities so you don’t have to re-invent the wheel. There are best practices that help teachers identify kids with developmental disabilities. The activities help to showcase the kids with needs and, therefore, teachers are able to tailor support accordingly.”

Second Step

Second Step teachers were more successful in adhering to the recommended curriculum dose. The majority (82 percent) of the Second Step teachers reported that they taught the weekly theme cards activities five to ten minutes per day as recommended by the program, and implemented the brain builder games two to three times per week (Exhibits 10 and 11).

Exhibit 10: Adherence to the Recommended Curriculum Dose * (n=34)

Frequency of the Weekly Theme Card lessons	
Recommended Amount	28 (82%)
Less than Recommended	3 (9%)
More than Recommended	2 (6%)
Other**	1 (3%)

**Recommended dosage for the Second Step curriculum is to teach the weekly theme cards for 5-10 minutes per day.
**One teacher teaches the weekly theme cards “every day, every week and throughout the day.”*

Exhibit 11: Adherence to the Recommended Curriculum Dose (n=34)

Frequency of the Brain Builder games	
Every day	13 (38%)
2-3 times per week	16 (47%)
1 time per week	4 (12%)
Every other week	0 (0%)
Other*	1 (3%)

**One teacher plays the Brain Builder games “not often at all.”*

When asked to identify the best part of the curriculum, almost half of the Second Step teachers (45 percent) mentioned the puppets and more than a quarter (27 percent) mentioned the songs. In conjunction, all six administrators reported that the students enjoyed the songs, puppets, and role playing. As one administrator noted, *“The structure and guidance of the curriculum has helped the teachers focus more on social and emotional development. Also, teachers are better able to educate the parents about their children’s needs.”*

Although the majority of teachers, administrators, and coaches reported positive initial experiences implementing the curricula in classrooms, some challenges were noted. Multiple respondents reported that acquiring some of the materials, such as the recommended books and CD players, was difficult. One respondent noted that it was somewhat of a burden to gather these materials, while another noted that funding was not set aside for that purpose. Additional challenges included:

- Teacher turnover and training new teachers. *Ensuring that substitute teachers are prepared to follow the curriculum was also reported as difficult.*
- High needs students. *One administrator noted that PEDALS might not be appropriate for a group of children with higher needs and developmental delays.*
- Coordination across classrooms. *As one administrator shared, “One site that shares students between multiple teachers struggled to communicate effectively to the teachers that the lessons should be taught at the same time in all classrooms.”*
- Curriculum language barriers. *This was noted especially for large refugee populations.*

DECA

Just as teachers, administrators and coaches reported the DECA training adequately prepared teachers to administer the tool, almost three-quarters (71 percent) of Second Step teachers reported the DECA was extremely or very easy to use in their classroom, and almost half (43 percent) of PATHS teachers reported the DECA was very easy to use. Another 27 percent of Second Step teachers and 57 percent of PATHS teachers responded that the DECA was neither challenging nor easy to use (Exhibit 12).

Exhibit 12: Ease of Using the DECA*

How easy or challenging has it been to use the DECA in your classroom?	
Second Step (n=34)	3.82
PATHS (n=7)	3.43
Overall (n=41)	3.75

**Mean ratings are based on a 5-point scale, with 5 being “extremely easy” and 1 “extremely challenging.”*

Similarly, all eight administrators interviewed also reported that the DECA was easy and straightforward to use. Administrators liked having the ability to see each child’s score on the assessment to better focus on a child’s specific needs. They reported that the color coded categories made it easy to read and recognize a child’s

strengths. As one administrator commented, *“The DECA allowed the teachers to allocate extra time to the students who lack social-emotional skills.”*

Likewise, all seven coaches reported that the DECA assessment was easy for teachers to administer. Coaches reported that they would like to see more utilization of the actual DECA results by teachers to make needed change and adjustments in the classroom. As one EC coach stated, *“My goal is to work with teachers to utilize the Promoting Resilience book that accompanies the DECA. The book provides strategies to use depending on different child experiences/outcomes. I would like to see more teachers use it.”*

Coaching

On average, about four to five months into PEDALS program implementation, PATHS and Second Step teachers reported receiving eight coaching sessions each. The majority of PATHS and Second Step teachers (96 percent) reported that they were very or extremely satisfied with the coaching they received (Exhibit 13). All of the surveyed teachers rated the coaches as good or very good on the following domains: curriculum knowledge, rapport and communication, poise and confidence, enthusiasm for the program, and ability to answer questions and concerns. Another 91 percent of PATHS and 97 percent of Second Step teachers strongly agreed or agreed that the coaching support gave them the confidence in implementing the curriculum in their classroom (Exhibit 14).

Exhibit 13: Satisfaction with the Coaching*

How satisfied are you with the coaching you received?	
Second Step (n=34)	3.53
PATHS (n=11)	3.09
Overall (n=45)	3.42

**Mean ratings are based on a 4-point scale, with 4 being “extremely satisfied” and 1 “not at all satisfied”.*

Exhibit 14: Confidence from Coaching Support*

The coaching support has given me confidence in implementing the curriculum in my classroom.	
Second Step (n=34)	3.53
PATHS (n=11)	3.00
Overall (n=45)	3.40

**Mean ratings of agreement are based on a 4-point scale, with 4 being “strongly agree” and 1 “strongly disagree”.*

Again, administrator interviews complemented these teacher survey results. All administrators reported high levels of satisfaction with the coaching. They noted that the coaches were available for questions, reminded teachers to submit necessary paperwork, were able to troubleshoot technical problems, and offered tips and suggestions regarding program implementation. Some administrators also reported that the coaches directed teachers to additional resources in the manual to assist them with their lessons. All of the administrators reported that the coaching worked very well. Many felt that there was nothing they would change about the coaching component. In fact, the suggestions for improvements that were proposed included offering more coaches per school and increasing the number of coaching visits.

All four QI and all three EC coaches reported that the PEDALS model allowed for flexibility in implementation and that the coaches were trusted to tailor their work based on the individual needs of the particular sites, teachers and students. Coaches were asked to describe what a typical coaching session looked like. Exhibit 15 displays responses by coach type.

Exhibit 15: Typical Coaching Session

Coaching Session Attributes	QI Coach	EC Coach
Coaching Session Participants	QI coach and administrator or center executive of each site	EC Coach, lead teacher and assistant teacher
Typical Coaching Session	30 minute monthly call	2 hour, in-person, meeting per month
Coaching Session Topic Areas	Data reported including overall trends and anomalies; individual site challenges; general Foundation system-level items (e.g., budget updates)	Curriculum implementation; Classroom management; Teacher/Parent concerns including student behavior concerns; TA assistance (e.g., DECA assistance)

Overall, QI and EC coaches reported at least monthly contact with either site administrators or teachers. QI coaches typically reported helping site administrators and teachers understand trends in DECA data and how to interpret and utilize this data for classroom improvement. EC coaches typically supported teachers with curriculum implementation including use of and support finding recommended materials (e.g., books). Their role also included support with classroom management, targeted support for individual children as needed, boosting teacher morale as needed and providing DECA implementation support.

III. Outcomes: PEDALS Impact

This chapter of the report presents results that speak to the quality of the PEDALS program including the value of each PEDALS program component and data demonstrating measureable improvements in social and emotional well-being of children.

Program Quality

In the final analysis, almost all (90 percent) Second Step and PATHS teachers rated their experience with the quality of the PEDALS program as excellent or good. Based on their experiences, 88 percent of Second Step and PATHS teachers think there is an absolute or high need for a program like PEDALS in the communities like the ones they serve (Exhibit 16 and 17).

Exhibit 16: Quality of the PEDALS Program*

Now that some time has passed, how would you rate the quality of the PEDALS program?	
Second Step (n=38)	4.47
PATHS (n=4)	3.75
Overall (n=42)	4.40

**Mean ratings are based on a 5-point scale, with 5 being "excellent" and 1 "poor."*

Exhibit 17: Need for a Program Like PEDALS*

Based on your experiences, to what extent do you think there is a need for a program like PEDALS in the communities like the ones you serve?	
Second Step (n=37)	4.35
PATHS (n=4)	4.50
Overall (n=41)	4.37

**Mean ratings are based on a 5-point scale, with 5 being "absolute need" and 1 "no need."*

Again, aligning with teachers responses, all administrators agreed that there is a definite need for a program like PEDALS. As one administrator commented, *"There is a need for PEDALS in all preschools, day care and head start centers to increase understanding of the importance of social-emotional development."*

Lastly, all seven coaches reported a need for PEDALS due to:

- A need for focus on and support around children's social-emotional development (n=4);
- Lack of funding within sites to afford evidence-based practices, models, and curricula (n=2); and
- Classroom management challenges (n=1).

Value of Curriculum

Teachers found the curriculum helpful in improving both student behavior and social and emotional development. Almost all Second Step and PATHS teachers (90 percent) reported that they found the

curriculum very or fairly helpful in improving the behavior of students in their classroom(s) (Exhibit 18). When looking at helpfulness of the curriculum in improving student social and emotional development, 93 percent of Second Step and PATHS teachers reported the curriculum to be very or fairly helpful (Exhibit 19).

Likewise, all administrators agreed to observing differences in how teachers and staff in the classrooms interacted with the students after the implementation of PEDALS curricula.

Exhibit 18: Helpfulness of the Curriculum in Improving Student Behavior*

How helpful has the curriculum been in improving the behavior of students in your classroom(s)?	
Second Step (n=38)	3.29
PATHS (n=4)	3.25
Overall (n=42)	3.29

***Mean ratings are based on a 4-point scale, with 4 being "very helpful" and 1 "no help at all."*

Exhibit 19: Helpfulness of the Curriculum in Improving Student Social and Emotional Development*

Frequency of the Brain Builder games	
Second Step (n=38)	3.58
PATHS (n=4)	3.50
Overall (n=42)	3.57

**Mean ratings are based on a 4-point scale, with 4 being "very helpful" and 1 "no help at all."*

Usefulness of DECA

Almost all teachers reported DECA information was useful for understanding the strengths and weaknesses of individual children. Overall, 95 percent of Second Step and PATHS teachers strongly agreed or agreed the DECA information was useful for supporting the social and emotional development of students served at their school. Another 90 percent of these teachers strongly agreed or agreed that they learned new or different things about the children they served from using the DECA (Exhibit 20).

Exhibit 20: DECA Usefulness

	Most Common Response	Overall (n=39-41)	Second Step (n=36-38)	PATHS (n=3)
Usefulness of the DECA (percentages)				
DECA information is useful for supporting the social and emotional development of students served at my school	Agree	95%	94%	100%
I have learned new or different things about the children I serve from using the DECA	Agree	90%	89%	100%

**Mean ratings are based on a 5-point scale, with 5 being "extremely easy" and 1 "extremely challenging."*

***Mean ratings are based on a 4-point scale, with 4 being "extremely confident" and 1 "not at all confident."*

Coaching Experience

At follow-up, all (100%) Second Step and PATHS teachers strongly agreed or agreed that PEDALS coaching support gave them confidence in implementing the curriculum in their classroom(s). Also, another 90%

reported being extremely or very confident in their ability to continue using the Second Step or PATHS curriculum in the future without the coaching support offered through PEDALS (Exhibit 21).

Exhibit 21: Confidence from and Satisfaction with Coaching Support

	Most Common Response	Overall (n=42)	Second Step (n=38)	PATHS (n=4)
Confidence from Coaching Support				
Confidence in implementing the curriculum due to coaching support*	Strongly Agree	3.76	3.79	3.50
Confidence in ability to use the curriculum in the future without coaching support**	Extremely Confident	3.36	3.37	3.25
Satisfaction with Coaching***				
Satisfaction with coaching received	Extremely Satisfied	3.69	3.74	3.25

*Mean ratings of agreement are based on a 4-point scale, with 4 being “strongly agree” and 1 “strongly disagree”.

**Mean ratings are based on a 4-point scale, with 4 being “extremely confident” and 1 “not at all confident.”

***Mean ratings are based on a 4-point scale, with 4 being “extremely satisfied” and 1 “not at all satisfied”.

Best/Least Favorite Part of Coaching

When asked to report on their best and least favorite part of coaching, almost three-quarters of the Second Step and PATHS teachers (73%) reported the best part of coaching is the extra support and advice provided in the classroom (Exhibit 22).

Exhibit 22: Best/Least Favorite Part of the Coaching Support

What do you like best about the coaching support? (n=40)*	
Extra support and advice/strategies provided	29 (73%)
Feedback from the coach	12 (30%)
Availability and accessibility of the coach	8 (20%)
Personality and friendliness of the coach	4 (10%)
Knowledge of the curriculum and the DECA	2 (5%)
What do you like the least about the coaching support? (n=9)	
Would like more frequent visits from the coach	6 (67%)
The coach comes too frequently	3 (33%)

*As some respondents provided multiple answers to this question, response categories do not add up to 100 percent.

Child Outcomes

In conjunction with determining the value of PEDALS, our evaluation measured actual progress toward improved social and emotional skills in children. The PEDALS classroom teachers rated each child using the

DECA assessment at six points (time point 1-6 or T1-6) over two school years; once at the very beginning of each school year, a second time mid-way through the school year, and a final assessment at the end of each school year. Matched baseline (T1 and T4) and post (T3 and T6) DECA data were available for a total of 160 children across the two years. Average age at baseline for children was 40 months (3 years) while average age at post was 59 months (5 years).

The DECA is a standardized behavior rating scale that is used to evaluate protective factors and behavior concerns in preschool children. The first section of the scale consists of 27 positive behaviors. Raters (i.e., the teachers) evaluated the frequency that a particular child exhibits the 27 behaviors. Individual items on this scale are aggregated into three subscales measuring the following protective factors:

- + **Initiative.** The child's ability to use independent thought and action to meet his or her needs.
- + **Self-Control.** The child's ability to experience a range of feelings and express them using the words and actions that society considers appropriate.
- + **Attachment.** A mutual, strong, and long-lasting relationship between a child and significant adults such as parents, family members, and teachers.³

The 27 positive items are also summed to calculate a Total Protective Factors score. These subscales can be converted to standardized scores, which are used to determine whether a protective factor is typical, a strength, or a concern for a particular child. Similarly, raters completed an 11 item Behavior Concerns scale for each child. Summed scores from the Behavior Concerns scale are also converted to a standardized score that is used to determine if the child's behavior is typical or a concern. The results from these assessments are as follows:

Protective Factors

Research has demonstrated that the possession of protective factors can buffer the negative effects of adversity and stress and lead to positive outcomes.⁴ As shown in Exhibit 23 through 26, PEDALS students exhibited improved protective factor scores over time. There was a statistically significant improvement in students' scores, from baseline (T1) to post (T6), in the initiative, self-control, attachment, and total protective factor domains. Additionally, there was a statistically significant improvement in students' scores, from year 1 baseline (T1) to year 2 baseline (T4), in the initiative, self-control, and total protective factor domains.

Nationally, on average, 16 percent of children will score within the "strength" category, 16 percent will score within "need," and 68 percent will score "typical" on protective factors. At year 1 baseline, 5 percent of students scored "strength" and 28 percent "need," demonstrating that these children had lower than average social-emotional protective factor scores. However, at the end of year 2, 30 percent scored "strength" and 8 percent a "need," showing that these children had moved ahead of the national average.

Aligning with these findings, Second Step and PATHS teachers reported noticing children being nicer to each other, showing more empathy towards one another, being more helpful and giving many more compliments. Also, all interviewed administrators stated that PEDALS helped improve the social and emotional development of their students.

³ Devereux Early Childhood Assessment User's Guide.

⁴ Werner, E.E., & Smith, R. S. (1982). *Vulnerable but invincible: A longitudinal study of resilient children and youth*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Exhibit 23: Initiative Category⁵ (n=160)⁶

	Y1 Baseline (T1) Category	Y1 Post (T3) Category	Y2 Baseline (T4) Category	Y2 Post (T6) Category
Strength⁷	8 (5%)	25 (16%)	7 (4%)	48 (30%)
Typical	108 (68%)	122 (76%)	138 (86%)	99 (62%)
Need	44 (28%)	13 (8%)	15 (9%)	13 (8%)

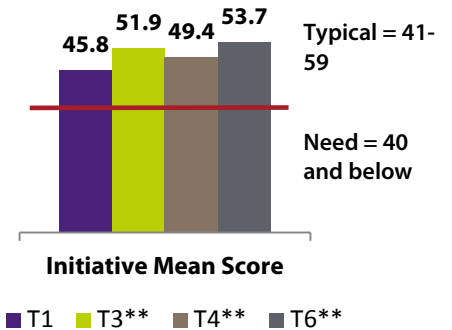


Exhibit 24: Self Control Category (n=160)

	Y1 Baseline (T1) Category	Y1 Post (T3) Category	Y2 Baseline (T4) Category	Y2 Post (T6) Category
Strength	8 (5%)	25 (16%)	15 (9%)	34 (21%)
Typical	122 (76%)	111 (69%)	121 (76%)	110 (69%)
Need	30 (19%)	24 (15%)	24 (15%)	16 (10%)

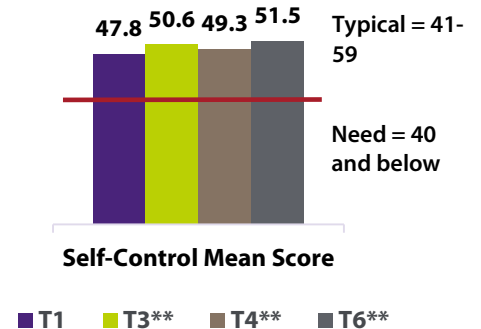
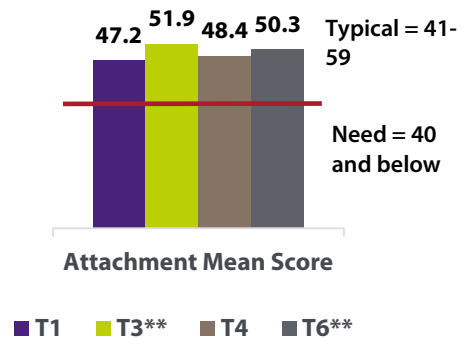


Exhibit 25: Attachment Category (n=160)

	Y1 Baseline (T1) Category	Y1 Post (T3) Category	Y2 Baseline (T4) Category	Y2 Post (T6) Category
Strength	8 (5%)	30 (19%)	7 (4%)	24 (15%)
Typical	122 (76%)	118 (74%)	130 (81%)	109 (68%)
Need	30 (19%)	12 (8%)	23 (14%)	27 (17%)



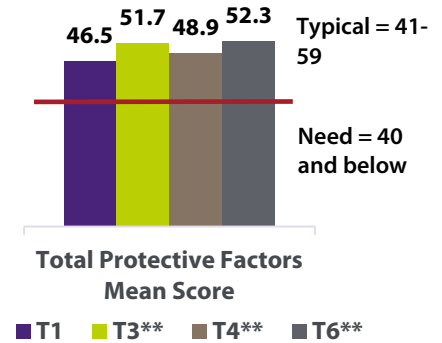
⁵ Categories are determined by subscale T-scores.

⁶ In all charts in this document, a statistically significant change between year 1 baseline (T1) and year 2 baseline (T4) or T1 and post scores (T6) will be denoted by a **.

⁷ For the Protective Factor Scales: T-scores of 60 and above indicate a strength; T-scores of 41 through 59 inclusive are typical; T-scores of 40 and below indicate an area of need.

Exhibit 26: Protective Factors Category (n=160)

	Y1 Baseline (T1) Category	Y1 Post (T3) Category	Y2 Baseline (T4) Category	Y2 Post (T6) Category
Strength	11 (7%)	34 (21%)	11 (7%)	39 (24%)
Typical	115 (72%)	112 (70%)	128 (80%)	98 (61%)
Need	34 (21%)	14 (9%)	21 (13%)	23 (14%)

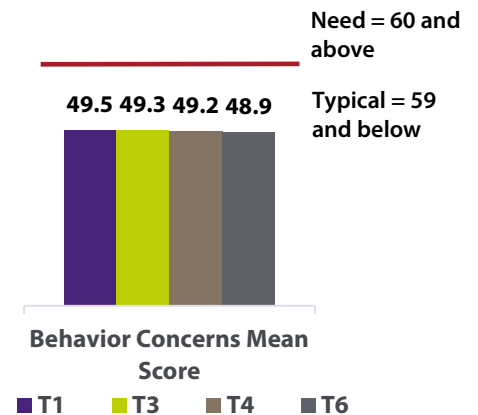


Behavior Concerns

Unlike the protective factor scores, behavior concern scores remained fairly consistent from year 1 baseline (T1) through year 2 baseline (T4) to post (T6). A few less children were typical at post (T6) than at baseline (T1) (79 and 83 percent, respectively) (Exhibit 27).

Exhibit 27: Behavior Concerns Category (n=160)

	Y1 Baseline (T1) Category	Y1 Post (T3) Category	Y2 Baseline (T4) Category	Y2 Post (T6) Category
Strength⁸	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Typical	133 (83%)	133 (83%)	136 (85%)	127 (79%)
Need	27 (17%)	27 (17%)	24 (15%)	33 (21%)



Nationally, an average of 82 percent of children will score within the “typical” category and 18 percent score “need” on behavior concerns. At year 1 baseline, 83 percent of the PEDALS students scored “typical” and 17 percent “need.” Likewise, at the end of year 2, 79 percent scored “typical” and 21 percent a “need,” demonstrating that these children scored very similarly to the national average over time.

Behavioral improvements reported by Second Step teachers included usage of calm down techniques (e.g., belly breathing), improved self-management skills (e.g., learning to take turns), improved listening and communication skills, and the ability of the child to identify, control and express their feelings and emotions. Similarly, PATHS teachers also reported improvements in children’s coping skills to control feelings and emotions. As one PATHS teacher stated, *“The children are remembering to use their words more, to calm themselves down before reacting, and to ask a teacher for help if they cannot resolve a conflict on their own.”*

⁸ For the Behavioral Concerns Scale: T-scores of 60 and above indicate an area of need; T-scores of 59 and below are typical.

Additionally, even though DECA behavior concern scores remained fairly consistent across the two years, all administrators, including almost all (90 percent) teachers (shown above) think PEDALS has improved student behavior. Grantees were asked for their thoughts regarding why developmental progress does not seem to align with evidence of behavioral improvement:

- “As a whole, student behavior is improving; however, there could be a small number of children developing slower than others, bringing down results.”
- “This could be a result of mild improvements only (e.g., maybe several children are still hitting, but not hitting, swearing and biting. Thus, there is improvement in behavior, but on DECA score, it might not show.”
- “An inconsistent home environment could be a factor. Their behavior could improve in class, but at home, this environment can be inconsistent (e.g., kid goes home for Christmas break and comes back a totally different kid).”
- “Maybe it has to do with different children acting out at different times. Could also be turnover of different kids (e.g., one child’s behavior decreased, but new student with higher level of

IV. Lessons Learned

In addition to PEDALS implementation and child outcomes, this evaluation sought to capture lessons learned. Interviews with teachers, administrators, and coaches focused on the importance of PEDALS program components, plans for the future, and program recommendations.

Importance of PEDALS program components

As the PEDALS program consists of three main components (curriculum, DECA, and coaching), teachers were asked, whether they saw each component as equally important, or whether one had been most useful. Half of the Second Step teachers (50 percent) and three-quarters of the PATHS teachers (75 percent) reported that the curriculum was the most important component of the PEDALS program (Exhibit 28).

Exhibit 28: Importance of PEDALS Program Components (curriculum, DECA and coaching)

	Second Step (n=38)	PATHS (n=4)
Equally Important	16 (42%)	1 (25%)
Curriculum is most important	19 (50%)	3 (75%)
DECA is most important	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Coaching is most important	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Curriculum and Coaching together	3 (8%)	0 (0%)

Plans for the Future

The evaluation team collected data on teachers' plans to continue using the curricula and DECA in classrooms after PEDALS is completed.

Continuation of Curriculum

All Second Step and PATHS teachers (100 percent) reported that they would continue using the curriculum in their classroom after PEDALS is completed (Exhibit 29). As a PATHS teacher stated,

“I believe the overall concept is extremely important and helpful for young children. Many children have difficulty verbalizing their feelings and working on stopping to think about how to react to them. In addition, many guardians do not possess coping mechanisms for dealing with their own feelings, making the repetition and early start of this program very effective.”

Exhibit 29: Continuation of the Curriculum*

Do you plan to continue using the curriculum in your classroom after PEDALS is completed?	
Second Step (n=38)	3.71
PATHS (n=4)	3.50
Overall (n=42)	3.69

**Mean ratings are based on a 4-point scale, with 4 being “definitely will continue to use the curriculum” and 1 “definitely will not continue to use the curriculum.”*

Seven of the eight administrators gave a definite yes when asked whether or not they plan to continue with the curriculum after the PEDALS program ends. The one administrator who was not a definite yes stated, *"We are looking at it. It needs to be approved by our board, but we would like to continue it."*

Additionally, administrators reported plans to spread the curriculum to additional classes (if not currently being implemented in all classrooms), and plans to start implementing elements of the curriculum within their toddler classrooms.

When looking even further into the future, another 81 percent of teachers reported being extremely or very likely to still be implementing the Second Step/PATHS curriculum in 5 years (Exhibit 30). Moreover, all administrators indicated hopes that in five years, their center will still be implementing the Second Step and/or PATHS curriculum. The majority stated that if they are still working at that particular school, then they are almost certain the curriculum will be continued.

Exhibit 30: Likelihood of Implementing Second Step/PATHS Curriculum in your Classroom in 5 Years

	Extremely likely	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not at all likely
Second Step (n=37)	14 (38%)	17 (46%)	5 (14%)	1 (3%)
PATHS (n=4)	0 (0%)	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	0 (0%)

Continuation of DECA

Administrators were a little less confident in DECA continuation. Three administrators responded, *"Yes, we will continue with the DECA assessment after PEDALS."* The other five were unsure, expressing either financial uncertainties or Executive Director and board approval as obstacles. Several of the administrators who were unsure commented that they already have additional assessments in place including the ASQ. As one Second Step administrator stated, *"Financially no; our agency is not able to do so. We have other assessments."*

Overall, in accordance with the teachers and administrators, all seven coaches were also hopeful that the PEDALS program would be sustained. Yet both administrators and coaches identified potential challenges to sustainability. These included:

- Administrator or director buy-in;
- Budget and funding (including need for any additional kits and/or wear and tear of materials); and
- Teacher turnover and the time and expense to train new teachers.

In addition, a Second Step administrator recommended that the Foundation seek to embed training capacity in the sites:

"I wish they had a train-the-trainer training. They only offer training once a year. There is money given to you to have this training. So, if we don't have this money to bring in a trainer and there is turnover, there may be problems with sustainability. If you already had someone on board who could train new staff, that would be helpful."

Program Recommendations

Teachers were asked if they would suggest any changes for Foundation staff if the Foundations were to implement PEDALS again with different grantees. Most teachers identified that elements of the curricula may be better suited for three-year olds than four-year olds and vice versa. Foundations could look into additional age-specific curricula (see Exhibit 31 for more recommendations).

Exhibit 31: Teacher Program Recommendations

If the Foundations were to implement PEDALS again with different grantees, is there anything you would suggest they do differently? (n=18)*

Be aware that elements of the curricula may be better suited for three year olds than four year olds and vice versa (n=7)

Cut out weekly lesson completion sheets (n=2)

More webinars, or continued training on how important social/emotional curriculum is in helping children (n=1)

Change the brain builder activity (n=1)

Offer a better list of books (n=1)

Provide a theme book for each week (n=1)

Provide curricula in Spanish or offer translation support; 99% of my students are Spanish speaking (n=1)

Offer more trainings at the beginning of the school year for new hires (n=1)

Include trainings for teacher aides and child care associates. They too are responsible for the social/emotional well-being of the children in our care (n=1)

DECA forms need to be more user friendly (n=1)

Increase coach presence in the schools/centers (n=1)

Create a strategy guide for teachers to use with specific behaviors that includes suggestions for regression of behaviors (n=1)

Provide information for parents to continue progress over the summer (n=1)

**Some respondents provided multiple answers to this question. Thus, responses will not add up to 18.*

In addition to teacher responses, administrators suggested:

- “Provide a basic one-page overview of the purpose and main concepts as an educational tool for prospective and current parents.”
- “Create an online teacher forum where teachers can collectively recommend books as resources for specific lessons.”
- “Create a parent website or portal to access activities or e-games for their kids.”

Lastly QI and EC Coach Program recommendations are summarized in Exhibit 32.

Exhibit 32: Coach Program Recommendations

QI Coach	EC Coach
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Only need one QI/EC coach position (i.e., a combined coach role per site)• Continue to encourage use of DECA data to drive curriculum and identify areas of need for youth• Curriculum may be a little advanced for children under age 3; consider more age-appropriate wording/language• Target even higher need, poverty stricken zip codes for implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide more opportunities for teachers to share successes/challenges• Encourage directors to incorporate initiative updates in monthly staff meetings• Encourage teachers to use the DECA supplemental materials strategy guide• Utilize the Second Step website• Tally sheets could be more positive• Continue orientation with new teachers

V. Concluding Thoughts

Through PEDALS, HFWCNY and The Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation introduced evidence-based curricula and quality improvement methods to preschool providers in fourteen key sites across Erie and Niagara Counties. During the evaluation period, PEDALS made significant strides toward improving the social and emotional well-being of children living in western and central New York. These strides included:

- Teachers confirmed that the PEDALS trainings gave them confidence to implement both the PATHS and Second Step curriculum and the DECA in their classrooms.
- According to teachers and administrators, both the PATHS and Second Step curriculum were very easy for teachers to integrate into existing curricula and lesson plans. Teachers reported that the curriculum was appropriate for the students served at their school. Administrators reported that PEDALS gave teachers additional tools useful in managing the classroom and engaging with both students and parents.
- Teachers also confirmed that the DECA was extremely or very easy to use. Likewise, administrators and coaches also felt that the administration of the DECA assessment was straightforward. However, several sites questioned whether they would continue with this aspect of the program because of budget or other obstacles.
- After implementation of PEDALS, teachers reported that the curriculum was helpful in improving both student behavior and social and emotional development. Additionally, teachers reported that the DECA information was useful for supporting the social and emotional development of students served at their school.
- In conjunction with teachers reporting improved student social and emotional development, DECA scores showed statistically significant improvements in student protective factor scores including the initiative, self-control, attachment and total protective factor domains from year one baseline to year two follow-up. When looking specifically at behavior concerns, these scores remained fairly consistent across years with slight declines from year one baseline to year two follow-up.
- Teachers reported that they were extremely or very satisfied with the coaching they received through PEDALS.
- Almost all teachers rated their experience with the quality of the PEDALS program as excellent or good. All teachers and almost all administrators reported that they will continue using the Second Step or PATHS curriculum in their classrooms after PEDALS is completed.

Overall, the findings of this evaluation suggest that PEDALS was well-implemented and had a positive influence on the social and emotional well-being of children in upstate New York.

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