Advancing Effective Interactions and Instruction Progress Report

Prepared for the Chairpersons of House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees

By UVA-CASTL

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1. Executive Summary

The team at UVA-CASTL's Advancing Effective Interactions and Instruction (AEII) initiative worked in partnership with the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) to help Virginia's early childhood leaders and teachers in publicly funded birth-to-five early childhood programs provide high-quality early learning experiences to support children's learning and development. In particular, CASTL-AEII coordinated independent, external CLASS® observations to learn about the quality of teacher-child interactions in early childhood classrooms and the alignment between local and external observations. In addition, CASTL-AEII supported local leaders to provide their teachers with high-quality individualized professional development (PD), including equity-focused professional learning communities and virtual coaching to help teachers implement equitable social-emotional teaching practices with every child.

COVID-19 Impact and Implications

COVID-19 continued to produce a widespread, significant impact on communities and the education system, especially for low-income families and communities of color (CDC, 2022; Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2022). Although early childhood programs moved from virtual and hybrid offerings in 2020-21 back to mostly in-person instruction in 2021-22, educator staffing shortages were common, leading to a disruption in continuity of care and education for attending children (July 2021 NAEYC report). Because pandemic and post-pandemic-related challenges remain for many families, programs, and communities, continuity of learning to promote children's social-emotional and academic development, as well as high-quality interactions and instruction, were pressing priorities for early childhood programs.

CLASS® Observations and Data in Early Childhood Classrooms

CASTL-AEII conducted external CLASS® observations in 667 early childhood classrooms across the 17 PDG communities (now the 9 Ready Regions) in sites participating in the first year of the Unified Virginia Quality Birth-to-Five System (VQB5). These observations took place in 135 Infant classrooms, 202 Toddler classrooms, and 330 PreK classrooms, which were spread across school-based programs (145 classrooms), center-based programs (484 classrooms), and family day home programs (38 classrooms). These observations represent the most comprehensive and largest effort to date[1] to reflect children's experiences in Virginia's early childhood programs receiving public funding. Given the critical role interactions play in supporting young children's development, understanding where there are strengths and challenges in providing these experiences will enable a targeted and data-informed approach to ensuring access to enriching experiences for all.

Key takeaways from the 2021-22 external CLASS® data indicate that:

- Many birth-to-five classrooms across age groups and types of programs offer enriching opportunities for children around the Commonwealth.

- Evidence of less effective experiences across all program types and ages point to a need for a comprehensive approach to intervention and support.

- Examining the alignment between local and external CLASS® observations provides insight on where regions can focus their attention to enhance their local observation practices.

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[1] For context: between 2017-2021, only 50 Infant classrooms and around 70 Toddler classrooms participated in the former quality improvement system, as participants were primarily PreK classrooms. Similarly, 170 childcare programs and only 1 family day home provider participated in the system; participants were predominantly in school-based settings.

- COVID-19, as well as the teacher staffing shortage, continued to pose challenges for conducting external observations. Flexibility and sensitivity to programs' needs should be continued in Practice Year 2.

Professional Development Supports

CASTL-AEII's professional development (PD) supports continued to address pandemic-related classroom challenges that heightened inequities. These PD supports included services (i.e., leader consultation, training, and coaching) and resources for leaders and teachers in early childhood education (ECE) programs. CASTL-AEII expanded online resources for leaders to aid in interpreting CLASS® data and planning data-driven PD to improve the quality of interactions, instruction, and curriculum implementation in birth-to-five early childhood classrooms. Other supports for leaders included equity-focused professional learning communities (PLCs). CASTL-AEII also added resources to the ECE Resource Hub, focused on equitable social-emotional instruction and foundational interactions to help early childhood teachers support children and families. Additionally, virtual coaching supported individual teachers in improving their equitable social-emotional instruction and interactions.

Key takeaways from data on PD supports include:

- AEII Coaching

  - The coaching model continued to show promise for birth-to-five educators in diverse settings.

  - The COVID-19 pandemic posed significant challenges for educators, overall, and affected their capacity to engage in coaching.

  - The coaching model could benefit from modifications that will increase teacher engagement.

- Professional Learning Communities

  - PLCs demonstrated promise as a modality for supporting leaders' capacity to utilize resources provided on the ECE Resource Hub to achieve division- or community-level PD goals.

  - Attendance in a recurring monthly meeting at a standard time was challenging given needs for leaders to take on other roles in their programs/programs they support.

- Other Resources and VQB5 Supports

  - The ECE Resource Hub and AEII websites continue to provide useful information for ECE leaders and teachers around the state.

  - CASTL-AEII developed and provided needed resources to support CLASS® data use and VQB5 implementation, including the Toolkit for Leaders to Promote Quality Improvement.

  - Collaborations with other ECE teams across the Commonwealth were essential to CASTL-AEII's work.

Looking Ahead

CASTL-AEII will collaborate with the VDOE to support ECE leaders and educators as they approach the daunting task of COVID-19 recovery in an equitable and inclusive manner to ensure high-quality ECE experiences for all children in the 2022-23 school year.

To this end, we will:

- Support the transition of external CLASS® observations to a new vendor.

- Serve high needs classrooms to improve experiences for children through a refined CASTL-AEII Professional Development model, which will include virtual coaching and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) services.

- Build upon existing partnerships and work to enhance collaboration across birth-to-five initiatives across Virginia, and in particular the Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation pilot.

- Collect ongoing implementation data in CASTL-AEII professional development to track referrals and teacher engagement and analyze outcome data to monitor impact.

2. Overview

Background

In 2017, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) released the report "Improving Virginia's Early Childhood Development Programs" that reviewed state-supported early childhood development programs and made recommendations for improving children's school readiness through investments to improve quality. The General Assembly supported these recommendations through several investments beginning in 2018-19 to understand and support quality teacher-child interactions, instruction, and research-based curriculum implementation across Virginia.

The University of Virginia's Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) has partnered with the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and publicly funded preschool programs to meet these goals since 2019. CASTL's Advancing Effective Interactions and Instruction (AEII) initiative was initially defined through Item 128.K of the 2019 Appropriation Act, referenced in the 2020 Legislative Report, with a sole focus on Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) programs. In March 2020, the General Assembly expanded the charge for CASTL's observations and professional development support to be provided to all publicly funded preschool classrooms, including VPI, Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), Title I, and 3-year-old classrooms in 2020-21. In addition, the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund provided additional support for CASTL and VDOE to develop and provide resources (e.g., coaching, online learning, leader supports) to address rising concerns about young children's social-emotional development in the context of the pandemic, all with the goal of supporting every child.

In collaboration with the VDOE, during the first year of the Unified Virginia Quality Birth-to-Five System (VQB5), CASTL-AEII expanded support to serve all birth-to-five programs that receive public funding in 2021-22. This work included building collaborative partnerships with the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) communities and other early childhood education (ECE) quality improvement providers currently working across this sector. This partnership building ensured that broader state and local support efforts were aligned and also supported local communities' measurement efforts to meet the goals outlined by the General Assembly. Additionally, CASTL-AEII continued to support leaders' efforts to provide focused, data-informed professional learning opportunities for their staff, as well as teachers' efforts to provide effective, responsive classroom interactions to prepare children for success in kindergarten and beyond.

CASTL-AEII prepared this Progress Report for the Chairpersons of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees. The main purpose is to summarize key activities, data, and accomplishments for 2021-22 that built off previous efforts and to describe plans for 2022-23.

CASTL-AEII Initiative Objectives

In collaboration with the VDOE, CASTL-AEII's focus in 2021-22 was to support the implementation of VQB5, facilitating our understanding of and ability to engage Virginia's ECE leaders and teachers to provide high-quality early learning experiences for all. During Practice Year 1 of VQB5, CASTL-AEII's main objectives were:

1. **Assess the quality of teacher-child interactions and instruction** through external observations using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®) tool in 600-700 randomly selected birth-to-five classrooms (weighted to capture a higher proportion of infant and toddler classrooms in childcare centers and family day homes).

2. **Provide feedback at the state and regional level on the levels of alignment between external and local CLASS® observation data** to promote the consistency and accuracy of local CLASS® data.

3. **Provide ongoing support and resources to enhance leaders' ability to enact high-quality, individualized professional development (PD)** including using CLASS® data to a) support local observers' accuracy and consistency and b) provide supports to teachers to enhance classroom practice.

4. **Provide PD directly to teachers through virtual, video-based coaching** to promote teachers' skills to interact equitably with children in order to support each child's social-emotional learning, mental health, and well-being and promote their readiness for kindergarten.

5. **Coordinate with other Quality Improvement Partners** to support the implementation of VQB5. Collaborations were both within CASTL (e.g., LinkB5) and outside of CASTL (e.g., Virginia Quality, Infant Toddler Specialist Network) to plan and deliver aligned supports for teachers, PDG community leads, and program leaders.

COVID-19 Impact

COVID-19 continued to exert a widespread, significant impact on the education system and communities, especially for families with low incomes and communities of color ([CDC, 2022](); [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2022]()). Staffing challenges increased in the 2021-22 school year, resulting in unprecedented levels of stress among educators and program leaders [(July 2021 NAEYC report)](). As leaders were faced with onboarding new staff at higher rates than ever before, children experienced discontinuity in their care and teachers often needed to work with different groups of children and shift which classroom they were working in to provide adequate care during staffing crises. Despite the scheduling challenges that these staffing shifts and pandemic-related periodic school closures caused, CASTL-AEII (working in close collaboration with PDG community leads) successfully completed 667 external CLASS® observations and provided professional development supports and resources to teachers and leaders during the 2021-22 school year.

Collaboration Across Early Childhood Initiatives

In line with the VDOE's focus on unifying measurement and improvement systems across the Commonwealth, CASTL-AEII increased our collaboration across initiatives and agencies. This year, CASTL-AEII ECE consultants worked closely with representatives from the VDOE, Virginia Quality, the Infant and Toddler Specialist Network, regional Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance (ECTA-T/TAC) providers, and other quality improvement providers with the overarching goal of aligning supports to the field to maximize our collective impacts. As a result of these collaborations, CASTL-AEII led the development of the Quality Improvement Toolkit, a resource for program leaders to help them with nine different areas of collecting, understanding, and using data to plan high-impact professional learning experiences.

Contents of this Report

The rest of this report provides a summary of 2021-22 CASTL-AEII activities, including what was accomplished in alignment with our main objectives regarding coordinating external CLASS® observations; providing supports to community leads around CLASS® alignment data; supporting leaders in planning for high-quality, individualized professional development; collaborating with Quality Improvement Partners to develop resource toolkits; and providing direct, virtual coaching to teachers. We then use lessons learned to identify next steps heading into the 2022-23 school year (see Looking Ahead section) as we continue to support VQB5.

3. CLASS® Observations and Data on Interactions

Overview: External Observations for VQB5 Practice Year 1

High-quality teacher-child interactions are foundational for children's experiences in early care and education settings. Children of all ages benefit from interactions with teachers, especially interactions that are warm and respectful, provide children with the appropriate level of autonomy, and enable children to be inquisitive with support from teachers.

Fall 2021 marked the start of Practice Year 1 of the Virginia Quality Birth-to-Five System (VQB5) to begin implementation of the new statewide unified measurement and improvement system. As part of VQB5 Practice Year 1, the quality of teacher-child interactions was evaluated using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System® (CLASS®). The CLASS® is an observational tool and can be used across various age groups and early childhood settings.

During VQB5 Practice Year 1, publicly funded classrooms in Preschool Development Grant (PDG) communities could opt into participating in VQB5. These classrooms received two CLASS® observations conducted by local observers.

Additionally, CASTL-AEII coordinated CLASS® observations with external observers in a subset of randomly selected classrooms. External observations during Practice Year 1 served two purposes. First, external observations allowed for examination of early childhood classroom interactions across a range of programs and communities. Second, having external and local CLASS® ratings created an opportunity to assess the consistency and accuracy of local observers. See Table 1 below for more information about the differences between local and external observations during VQB5 Practice Year 1.

Table 1
Difference Between Local and External CLASS® Observations

	Local Observations	**External Observations**
What was the observation purpose?	Local observations were the primary method for gathering data about the quality of interactions in each VQB5 participating classroom. The data provided feedback to tailor teachers' professional development.	External observations were the secondary method for gathering data and were used to evaluate the consistency of local observations. Data were aggregated to look at overall observer alignment.
Who was observed?	Every VQB5 participating classroom received two local observations during Practice Year 1 (one in the fall and another in the spring).	Classrooms were randomly selected to receive external observations in Practice Year 1, representing about 14% of participating classrooms.
Who conducted the observation?	In Practice Year 1, PDG communities coordinated and scheduled local observations. Observers included PDG community staff members, site directors or principals, teachers, and other educators with connections to the community.	In Practice Year 1, CASTL-AEII coordinated and scheduled the external observations. Observers were from an external organization (Teachstone) with no connection to the local community.

2021-2022 Observation Sample

CASTL-AEII coordinated the randomization and selection of early childhood classrooms to receive external CLASS® observations based on their age group (i.e., Infant, Toddler, or PreK) and site type (i.e., public school, childcare center, or family day home). Given that previous years of observation data predominantly included school-based PreK classrooms, the randomization was weighted to include a greater percentage of Infant and Toddler classrooms, as well as classrooms in childcare centers and family day homes. The selection process allowed for random selection to occur, while also getting a better picture of experiences within Virginia's early childhood classrooms not previously represented in data collection. Table 2 shows the final sample of classrooms that received external observations, broken down by age group and site type. In total, external CLASS® observations occurred in 667 classrooms, representing 14 percent of the VQB5 Practice Year 1 participating classrooms.

Table 2
External CLASS® Observation Sample by Age Group and Site Type

	CLASS® Tool	Number of Participating PDG Classrooms	Number of Classrooms Receiving External Observations	Percent of Participating Classrooms Receiving External Observations
Public Schools	Infant CLASS®	0	0	0
	Toddler CLASS®	54	15	28%
	PreK CLASS®	1,469	130	9%
Childcare Centers	Infant CLASS®	533	132	25%
	Toddler CLASS®	985	161	16%
	PreK CLASS®	1,495	191	13%
Family Day Homes[2]	Infant CLASS®	22	3	14%
	Toddler CLASS®	163	26	16%
	PreK CLASS®	88	9	10%
Total		**4,809**	**667**	**14%**

Ongoing COVID-19 Challenges

There were numerous ongoing challenges for scheduling and conducting external observations this year due to COVID-19 and the educator staffing crisis. Some of these issues included sites not allowing

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[2] Family day home providers often have children from all three age groups in their classrooms. These numbers indicate the age group that represented the most children in the family day home to determine which CLASS® tool to use.

visitors, sites and classrooms closing due to positive cases, and directors and teachers dealing with stress and mental health challenges. The ongoing teacher staffing crisis also significantly affected the early childhood field this year, which resulted in one of the most common challenges CASTL-AEII encountered. In many sites, teachers had to be shuffled around classrooms, classrooms and children had to be rearranged, and sometimes directors stepped in to teach.

CASTL-AEII responded to these challenges with flexibility and sensitivity. External CLASS® observations were conducted in classrooms offering in-person instruction. CASTL-AEII worked with sites to ensure there was a consistent adult present on the day of scheduled observations. The preferred modality was to conduct CLASS® observations in person, but a few sites did not allow visitors due to ongoing COVID protocols. For some sites, observers used existing technology at the site to conduct "remote-live" observations (i.e., the observer watched a live video stream of the classroom interactions). Other sites video-recorded the CLASS® observations and shared the footage with CASTL-AEII to score as an external observation. External observations were rescheduled when there were COVID or teaching shortage issues, and classrooms that closed were taken off the observation list. The vast majority (N = 645) of classrooms had in-person observations, while a small number of classrooms conducted remote-live observations (N = 16) or video-recorded observations (N = 6).

External CLASS® Observation Data

CASTL-AEII conducted external CLASS® observations in 667 early childhood classrooms across all 17 PDG communities during the fall and spring VQB5 observation windows. As noted previously, the sample receiving external observations represented 14 percent of the classrooms who participated in VQB5 Practice Year 1. Infant and Toddler classrooms were represented more than PreK classrooms, and childcare and family day home classrooms were represented more than public school classrooms.

External CLASS® Observation Domain Descriptives

Each classroom observation was conducted with the appropriate observation tool (i.e., based on the age of the majority of children in the classroom). Observations consisted of four observation cycles (approximately 20 minutes of observation, followed by 10 minutes of scoring for each cycle); cycle scores were then averaged for each dimension. Dimension scores within each domain were averaged to calculate the domain scores of Responsive Caregiving (Infant CLASS®); Emotional and Behavioral Support and Engaged Support for Learning (Toddler CLASS®); or Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support (PreK CLASS®).

Table 3 shows the average CLASS® domain scores for Infant, Toddler, and PreK CLASS® observations, as well as the total dimension average for each age group. Each row includes the mean (or average) score across the observations, the standard deviation, and the range of the lowest to highest scores observed. Average scores for the CLASS® dimensions of each CLASS® tool can be found in Table 1 in the Appendix.

In the sample represented here, average CLASS® domain scores conducted by external observers tended to be in the mid-range (i.e., scores between 3.00-5.99), with domains related to emotional and behavioral interactions scoring more in the mid-high range and domains related to cognitive interactions scoring more in the low (i.e., scores between 1.00-2.99) or low-mid range.

Table 3

External CLASS® Domain Score Descriptive Statistics

CLASS® Tool/Domains	Mean[+]	Standard Deviation	Range
Infant CLASS® **N = 135 observations**			
Responsive Caregiving Domain Average	4.43	1.16	1.94 – 6.69
Infant Total Dimension Average	**4.43**	**1.16**	**1.94 – 6.69**
Toddler CLASS® **N = 202 observations**			
Emotional and Behavioral Support Domain Average	5.37	0.94	2.80 – 7.00
Engaged Support for Learning Domain Average	3.08	1.00	1.17 – 6.67
Toddler Total Dimension Average	**4.51**	**0.92**	**2.34 – 6.88**
PreK CLASS® **N = 330 observations**			
Emotional Support Domain Average	5.69	0.84	2.88 – 7.00
Classroom Organization Domain Average	5.44	1.00	1.58 – 6.92
Instructional Support Domain Average	2.62	0.93	1.00 – 5.50
PreK Total Dimension Average	**4.70**	**0.83**	**2.33 – 6.48**

+Note. CLASS® scores range from 1-7, with higher scores indicating higher quality interactions.

Table 4 provides the CLASS® domain and total dimension averages, along with standard deviations and ranges, by early childhood site type. In examining trends, public schools generally tended to have higher domain scores across all three CLASS® tools, followed by family day homes, then childcare centers. (For descriptive statistics of the three CLASS® tools for early childhood special education (ECSE) classrooms and dual language learner (DLL) classrooms that received external observations, see Tables 2 and 3 in the Appendix.)

Table 4

External CLASS® Domain Score Averages by Site Type

CLASS® Tool/Domains	Public Schools	Childcare Centers	Family Day Homes
Infant CLASS®	**N = 0**	**N = 132**	**N = 3**
Responsive Caregiving Domain Average	N/A	M = 4.39 (SD = 1.14) Range: 1.94 – 6.69	M = 6.08 (SD = 0.36) Range: 5.67 – 6.31
Infant Total Dimension Average	**N/A**	**M = 4.39 (SD = 1.14) Range: 1.94 – 6.69**	**M = 6.08 (SD = 0.36) Range: 5.67 – 6.31**
Toddler CLASS®	**N = 15**	**N = 161**	**N = 26**
Emotional and Behavioral Support Domain Average	M = 5.83 (SD = 0.58) Range: 4.67 – 7.00	M = 5.29 (SD = 0.94) Range: 3.07 – 6.90	M = 5.58 (SD = 1.04) Range: 2.80 – 7.00
Engaged Support for Learning Domain Average	M = 3.79 (SD = 0.74) Range: 2.58 – 5.00	M = 2.96 (SD = 0.93) Range: 1.17 – 6.25	M = 3.39 (SD = 1.32) Range: 1.58 – 6.67
Toddler Total Dimension Average	**M = 5.06 (0.59) Range: 4.00 – 5.97**	**M = 4.42 (SD = 0.89) Range: 2.46 – 6.63**	**M = 4.76 (SD = 1.08) Range: 2.34 – 6.88**
PreK CLASS®	**N = 130**	**N = 191**	**N = 9**
Emotional Support Domain Average	M = 5.91 (SD = 0.67) Range: 3.38 – 7.00	M = 5.54 (SD = 0.92) Range: 2.88 – 7.00	M = 5.85 (SD = 0.55) Range: 4.94 – 6.75
Classroom Organization Domain Average	M = 5.79 (SD = 0.78) Range: 3.00 – 6.92	M = 5.23 (SD = 1.07) Range: 1.58 – 6.92	M = 5.03 (SD = 0.87) Range: 3.59 – 6.08
Instructional Support Domain Average	M = 2.87 (SD = 0.86) Range: 1.25 – 5.50	M = 2.46 (SD = 0.95) Range: 1.00 – 5.33	M = 2.51 (SD = 0.88) Range: 1.00 – 4.17
PreK Total Dimension Average	**M = 4.97 (SD = 0.66) Range: 2.70 – 6.30**	**M = 4.52 (SD = 0.89) Range: 2.33 – 6.48**	**M = 4.60 (SD = 0.64) Range: 3.78 – 5.78**

CLASS® Observation Alignment Data

As noted above, the second goal of conducting external CLASS® observations was to learn more about the consistency of observers across the Commonwealth. During the fall VQB5 Practice Year 1 data window, CASTL-AEII and the VDOE identified three PDG communities to collaborate with in a pilot of the alignment process. Following the closing of the fall data window and the cleaning of the VQB5 data, CASTL-AEII created alignment reports that examined the PDG community-level local observation data with the external observation data. A CASTL-AEII consultant then met with the community leaders to discuss the alignment data along with next steps for supporting local observers. Leaders also provided feedback on the process and report, leading to enhancements for the next observation window. Data from the fall observation alignment reports suggested that local observation averages tended to be higher than the external observation averages. Alignment also tended to be higher for Toddler and PreK classroom observations than Infant classroom observations.

At the time of writing this report, the spring VQB5 Practice Year 1 window for local observations has just closed. The local observation data are in the process of being cleaned and will be available for alignment analyses at the end of June. Following the release of this data to CASTL-AEII, 2021-22 alignment reports will be created and provided to each of the nine Ready Regions as well as a summary report to VDOE.

Key Takeaways on External CLASS® Observation Data

Takeaways from external CLASS® data on teacher-child interactions in this sub-sample of early childhood programs across the Commonwealth indicate:

1. **Many birth-to-five classrooms across age groups and types of programs offer enriching opportunities for children around the Commonwealth.** The data suggest that many children experience rich, high-quality classroom interactions. However, there are some classrooms where intervention is needed to support children's learning and development. Given these interactions are malleable and can be enhanced through individualized professional development, the field needs to examine data more closely and consider how to respond accordingly.

2. **Evidence of less effective experiences across all program types and ages points to a need for a comprehensive approach to intervention and support.** Specifically, 43 of the externally observed classrooms scored a 2.99 or lower, indicating a need for support to maximize the benefit of ECE on children's development. Utilizing the wide-scale implementation of CLASS® observations and a data-driven approach, resources can be targeted as an integral part of the quality, feedback, and improvement process.

3. **Examining the alignment between local and external CLASS® observations provides insight on where regions can focus their attention to enhance their local observation practices.** Reliable data is essential to ensure that there is consistency amongst local observers around the Commonwealth. Alignment data provides a way to support communities and observers so that local CLASS® observations truly reflect children's experiences.

4. **COVID-19, as well as the teacher staffing shortage, continued to pose problems for conducting observations.** External observations were adapted, rescheduled, or canceled based on extenuating circumstances. Flexibility and sensitivity to programs' needs should be continued in VQB5 Practice Year 2.

4. AEII Professional Development Supports

Overview of Professional Development Supports Provided in 2021-2022

CASTL-AEII provided professional development (PD) resources and supports to teachers and leaders across a variety of settings (i.e., family day homes, childcare centers, and schools) serving different early childhood age groups (i.e., infant, toddler, mixed-age, and PreK classrooms). In 2021-22, CASTL-AEII's resources and supports focused on individualized coaching for teachers, professional learning communities for leaders, and resources for quality improvement.

This section includes a summary of CASTL-AEII's progress to date on key PD activities, including virtual coaching for teachers, equity-focused PLCs for leaders, CASTL-AEII's online presence (www.aeiionline.org) and online ECE Resource Hub, and other development, consultation, and collaborative work. Detailed descriptions of these activities can be found in the June 2021 Annual Report.

Virtual Coaching for Teachers

Overview of Coaching Model

The AEII coaching model was first designed in 2020 to mitigate heightened social-emotional needs and inequities resulting from COVID-19 by bolstering teachers' well-being and helping teachers implement equitable social-emotional teaching practices with every child. Intended outcomes were to improve teacher-child interactions, especially as measured by CLASS®, and support children's social skills, self-regulation skills, and overall learning. The Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) funds enabled CASTL-AEII to continue implementation of the virtual, evidence-based CASTL-AEII coaching model with select teachers in 2021-22.

Given that 2020-21 coaching data indicated the virtual, video-based coaching model showed promise, CASTL-AEII continued the core elements of the coaching model during 2021-22 and also made revisions to address our expansion of the program to serve birth-to-five learning environments. Revisions included new infant and toddler teacher self-assessments linking to the new ECE Resource Hub resources as well as a new kickoff session with teachers designed to promote engagement. CASTL-AEII developed materials to support fidelity and scaling of the coaching model, including a coaching manual, the CASTL Coaching Cycle Fidelity Tool, and a step-by-step guide for teachers on how to use our online coaching platform (TORSH Talent HS).

The coaching targeted equitable social-emotional instruction, with specific topics following a Scope & Sequence that corresponded with ECE Resource Hub Topics of the Month (see Table 5 below). Coaches offered teachers coaching sessions via video conferences on an every-other-week schedule, with two sessions focused on each topic. Coaching used the TORSH Talent HIPAA Secure (TORSH Talent HS) platform as a video coaching system where teachers uploaded videos of their practice and coaches provided timestamped feedback. They also held "coach-leader coordination sessions" at the start of coaching to promote alignment and leaders' support for the coaching initiative.

Table 5
Coaching Scope & Sequence

Session numbers	Scope & Sequence of Topics
[Onboarding]	Kickoff Session
1-2	Building Teacher-Child Relationships

Session numbers (continued)	Scope & Sequence of Topics (continued)
3-4	Developing Empathy and Sense of Self
5-6	Supporting Children's Emotions
7-8	Supporting Children's Behavior
9-10	Strengthening Peer Relationships
11-12	Supporting Social Problem-Solving
[Wrap-up]	Reflection and Exploration

Teacher Recruitment and Participation in Coaching

Due to VQB5 Practice Year 1 constraints, CASTL-AEII did not have access to local CLASS® data to target classrooms based on need. Per request from the VDOE, CASTL-AEII prioritized family day homes and childcare centers since these programs were newer to the quality improvement process. Recruitment occurred on a rolling basis throughout the fall in coordination with PDG community leaders and the Director of Head Start Collaboration. The recruitment process involved multiple meetings with community leads, asking them to share coaching flyers and videos with site leaders. Site leaders were then prompted to share our Interest Form with their teachers. In January, due to lower-than-expected recruitment numbers, CASTL-AEII reached out to participating site leaders and asked them to share the Interest Form again with their teachers.

Over the course of the year, 67 teachers voluntarily signed up to participate from 40 sites across 11 PDG communities. Recruited teachers represented varied site types: Head Start (16%), childcare centers (46%), family day homes (12%), ECSE classrooms (7%), combined Head Start/ECSE (6%), and VPI Classrooms (9%). Coaching was initiated with all 67 teachers. Eight teachers discontinued participation before beginning any sessions, 13 discontinued (withdrew or were non-responsive) after completing at least one session, and 10 teachers became ineligible due to factors such as resigning or switching positions within their site. 36 teachers participated in coaching through the end of Spring 2022. Coaching data indicated that participating teachers, on average, had 4 coaching sessions (M = 3.81 [SD 3.25], Range 1-12) after completing the kickoff (onboarding) session.

Description of Participating Teachers and Classrooms

Participating teachers who completed the spring survey (27 teachers, 75% of 36 teachers who continued coaching through spring) were all female (100%), and 56% of teachers identified as White, 37% as Black, and less than 1% as Asian or Other. Educational attainment varied, ranging from high school diploma or equivalent (less than 1%) to master's degree (22%), with most teachers holding a bachelor's degree (33%). Years of teaching in early childhood education varied widely, with most teachers having significant experience (M = 14 years, range: 1-33 years).

Demographic data indicated that children in the classrooms served ranged from infants to age five and were racially and ethnically diverse. 30% of teachers responding to the survey indicated that multiple languages were spoken by children in the classroom. The average class size was 14 students (ranging from 2-35 students), and on average, classrooms had a similar proportion of boys and girls (53% boys, 47% girls).

Coaching Implementation and Outcomes

The following data on coaching implementation and outcomes were collected via coaching logs, tracking sheets, and Spring surveys from teachers who completed coaching in Spring 2022. Where indicated, additional data is included from exit interviews with teachers who withdrew from coaching.

Coaching Implementation: Dosage and Focus

Teachers, on average, had 4 coaching sessions, but dosage varied widely (SD 3.25, Range 1-12; see Figure 1). Most teachers (58%) started coaching when initially offered in late fall, with 42% beginning in the spring (January-March) after the second round of recruitment efforts. While virtual coaching sessions were available to most teachers every other week from approximately October to May, teachers often delayed scheduled sessions for reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including illnesses and staffing shortages. The majority of teachers (70%) also reported that the pandemic had a significant impact on their teaching role and stress level. When teachers' availability for coaching was limited, coaches were flexible with their supports, including extending time between sessions and communicating with site leaders to request protected time for coaching sessions.

Figure 1
Distribution of Coaching Sessions Completed
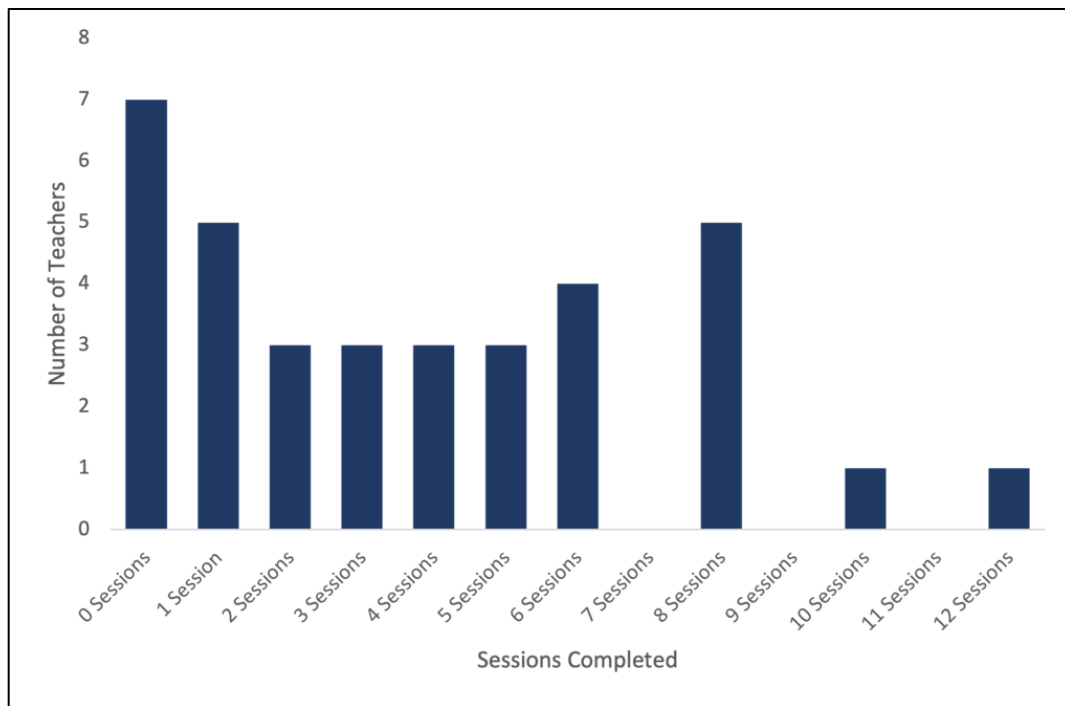
Coaching sessions and Action Plans focused on topics in the planned Scope & Sequence. More teachers had sessions on earlier topics (e.g., Teacher-Child Relationships) than later topics (e.g., Strengthening Peer Relationships; see Figure 2 for the percentage of teachers who received at least one coaching session on each topic). A sample Action Plan and samples of Action Plan goals are provided in Figures 1 and 2 in the Appendix.

Figure 2
Percent of Teachers Receiving Coaching on Each Topic
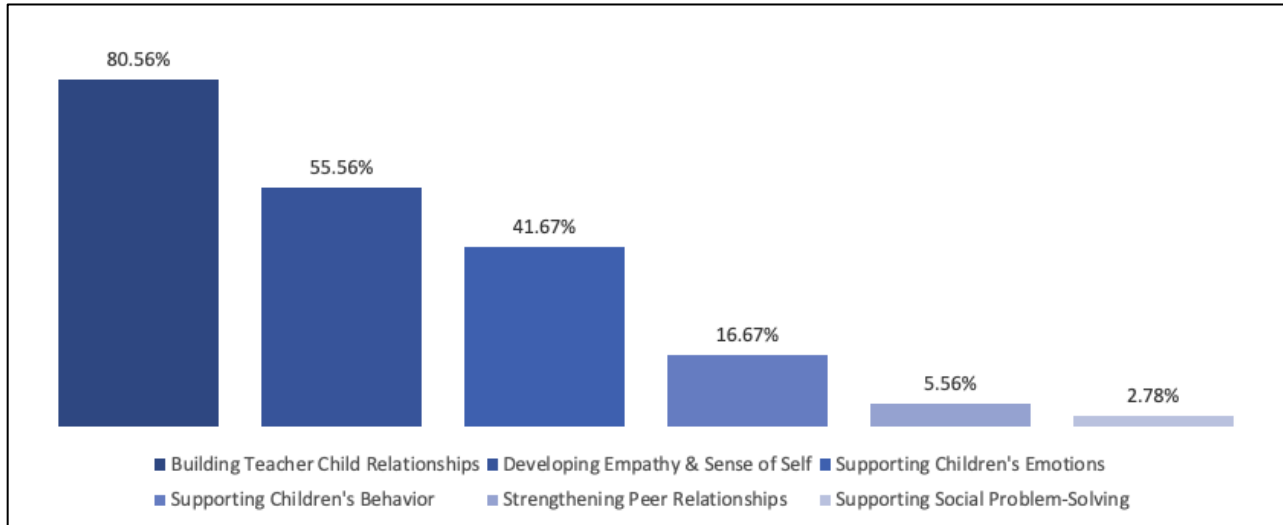
After creating an action plan based on a specific goal, teachers were asked to submit one video of their practice before each session. The coach then provided timestamped feedback on the video and requested the teacher review and respond to the feedback before their next meeting. Across the coaching, 36 teachers had an average of 2 video observations with feedback from their coaches, though this varied widely (Range 0 - 7), with some teachers (45%) completing 2 to 7 videos but most teachers completing none (33%) or 1 video observation (22%).

Coaching Outcomes

Teachers reported growth in all equitable social-emotional instructional topics on which they felt supported by coaches (mean increases of 1.6-2.11 on a 10-point scale where 1 = not very skilled and 10 = highly skilled on a range of 1-6 topics). See Figure 3 for reported growth on each topic.

Figure 3
Teacher-Reported Social-Emotional Instruction Skill Levels Before and After Coaching
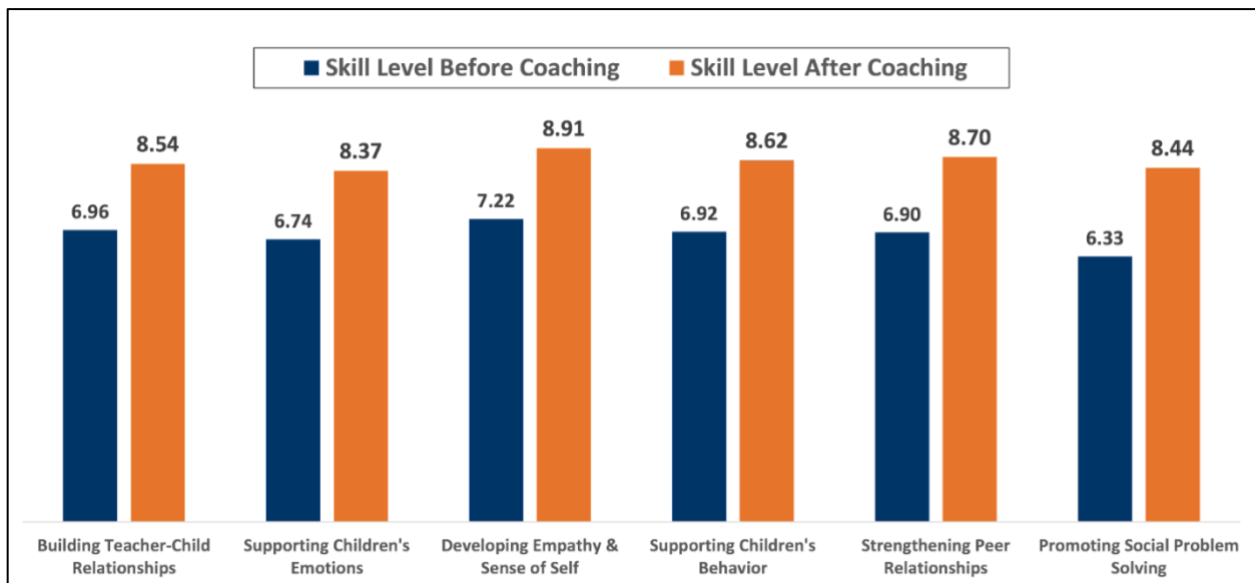
Teacher Feedback on Coaching Benefits

Teachers reported that coaching was beneficial in all areas assessed (mean scores ranged from 4.04-4.41 on a scale with 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The highest rated benefits were the relationship with their coach (M = 4.41) and that coaching helped teachers reflect on how their well-being impacts the social-emotional supports they provide to students (M = 4.41). Other positive feedback and select quotes from teachers are detailed in Figures 4 and 5.

Figure 4
Teacher Feedback on Perceived Benefits of Coaching

92%
Felt coaching helped them reflect on their teaching practices

89%
Felt their students benefitted from their work with their coach

89%
Felt their coaches provided them with practical and useful feedback

85%
Believe coaching was worth the time it took

70%
Felt the video coaching platform was beneficial
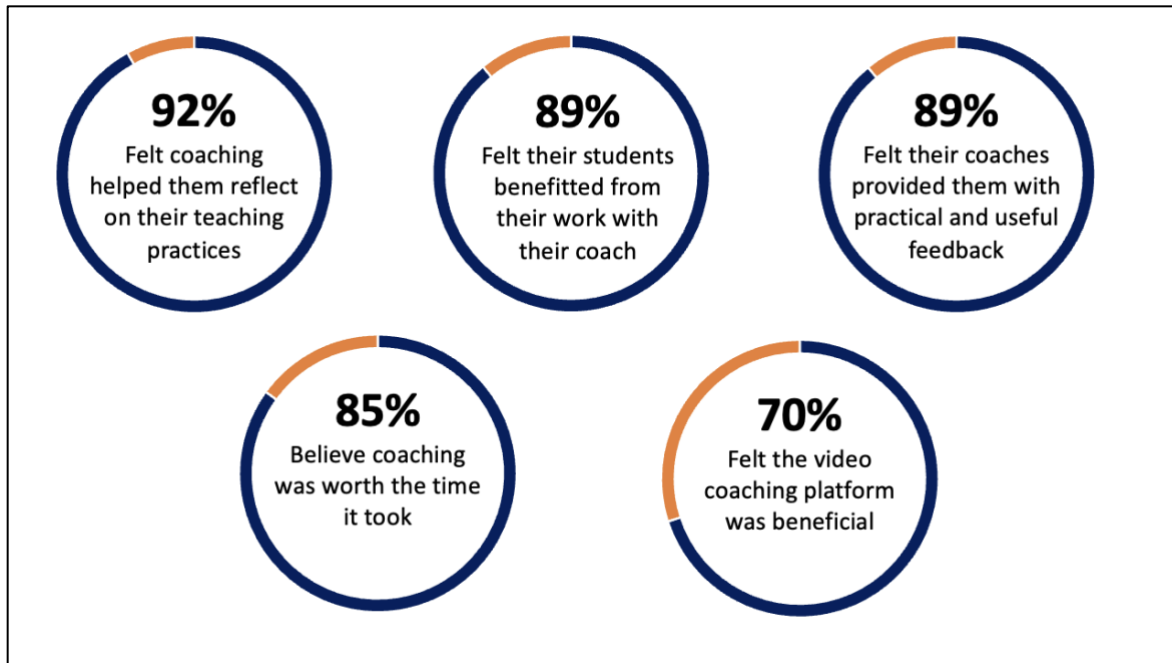
Figure 5
Quotes from Teachers on Coaching Benefits

"I learned a lot about taking videos of me interacting with children and see [sic] how I can improve each area of development towards children!"

"The program has helped me realize that each child is different and has different needs and it's worth taking time to get to know each and every one of them to best help them."

"I have grown my practice by placing more emphasis on each individual child's feelings and acknowledging my own biases."

"My coach helped me help my class realize that some [children] have a harder time managing their emotions and may need something different from me than they do...This was my big challenge of the year, and it was great to have the coach's guidance and support."

Teacher Feedback on Barriers to Coaching

Teachers reported moderate levels of challenges to coaching participation (mean scores ranged from 2.19-3.41 on a scale with 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), but the most common barrier was time (M = 3.41), followed by technology (i.e., using TORSH-HS) (M = 3.00). Figure 6 highlights some of the most common barriers to coaching.

Figure 6
Teacher-Reported Barriers to Coaching (N=27)

For 13 teachers who discontinued coaching after completing at least one session, they identified lack of time as a common factor. For instance, one teacher reported that they discontinued coaching because they did not "have the spare time during the workday to commit to coaching." Additionally, CASTL-AEII invited all teachers (21) who discontinued coaching to complete exit interviews. Of the 4 teachers who participated, they each shared that they liked the coaching model and felt it was beneficial; however, personal barriers (e.g., family stress) or miscommunication with their coach resulted in their decision not to continue coaching.

Teacher Feedback on Modifications to Coaching
Given some of the challenges for coaching engagement, teachers were asked about a range of modifications that would have made participation easier. Roughly half of teachers indicated participation incentives, low technology alternatives, and individualization of sessions (including choosing topic, format, and total number of sessions) would be "very helpful" potential modifications.

Key Takeaways for Coaching

1. **The AEII Coaching model shows promise for birth-to-five educators in diverse settings.** Teachers from childcare centers, family day homes, and school-based settings reported benefits to coaching and growth in their social emotional practices and interactions with children. Access to local CLASS® data in future years will be beneficial both for measurement of coaching outcomes and more effective, efficient targeting of supports to those who need it most.

2. **The COVID-19 pandemic posed significant challenges for educators, overall, and affected their ability to engage in coaching.** As reported by teachers, COVID-19 continued to impact sites this year through staff shortages and illness, making it more difficult to find the time and energy to engage in coaching. Given the possibility of continued workplace and workforce disruptions, continued consideration of how to be flexible and maximally engage teachers is necessary.

3. **Modifications to the coaching model may increase teacher engagement.** Spring survey responses and exit interviews uncovered an array of systemic and personal challenges that made engaging in coaching difficult for teachers this year. Thus, features of the coaching model

(i.e., scheduling, technology, formats) and motivating factors can be enhanced to increase teachers' ability to engage. Possible modifications for next year include shortening the sequence of sessions, providing teachers choice of session topics, coordinating the scheduling of coaching sessions with leaders, publicizing teacher incentives (such as PD/recertification points), and providing more training/support around navigation of the virtual coaching platform.

Professional Learning Communities for Program Leaders

Overview of Supports Provided to ECE Leadership

In Spring 2021, CASTL-AEII developed a four-session professional learning community (PLC) series for leaders interested in utilizing the Considering Equity resources on the ECE Resource Hub. Participants rated this experience as highly impactful and beneficial, and all sections had waitlists to join. Therefore, in 2021-22, CASTL-AEII offered an enhanced, six-session series to both those on the Spring 2021 waitlist and a broader range of ECE leaders working in any birth-to-five program receiving public funding (i.e., administrators of school-based PreK programs, training and technical assistance [T/TA] providers, center directors, and family day home providers).

Leaders selected from multiple options each month (October through May) to attend the six sessions in the series. Overarching learning objectives were to: (1) support leaders in considering their own experiences with equity to be better prepared to facilitate teacher/staff discussions on these topics, (2) connect leaders across the state who have aligned goals around providing equitable, inclusive opportunities to all children in order to facilitate collaboration, and (3) increase leaders' use of the Considering Equity resources on the ECE Resource Hub.

Leader Participation

Twenty-five participants attended initial orientation sessions offered in October 2021. Participants included family day home providers (16%), center directors (28%), T/TA providers (40%), and school system administrators working in schools that serve children under five years old (12%).

72% of those who attended the initial orientation went on to attend substantive sessions held from November through April, during which participants reviewed and discussed resources from the ECE Resource Hub related to supporting equitable opportunities for every child. Between 61% and 83% of initial participants attended each subsequent session, with an average of 4 leaders attending each offered session. Leaders reported that common barriers to participation were scheduling conflicts (43%) and being pulled into the classroom due to staffing shortages/crisis situations (29%).

Leader Feedback

Leaders consistently agreed that the PLCs helped prepare them to have discussions about race and equity, supported their planning around building equitable learning environments, and provided related PD to their teachers. Leaders were also satisfied with their PLC experience and appreciated the fit of the equity focus with their community's or school division's goals (see Figures 7-9 for details, including select leader quotes). 86% of respondents indicated their communities and program/school division leadership supported a focus on creating equitable environments in their programs' PD offerings.

Figure 7
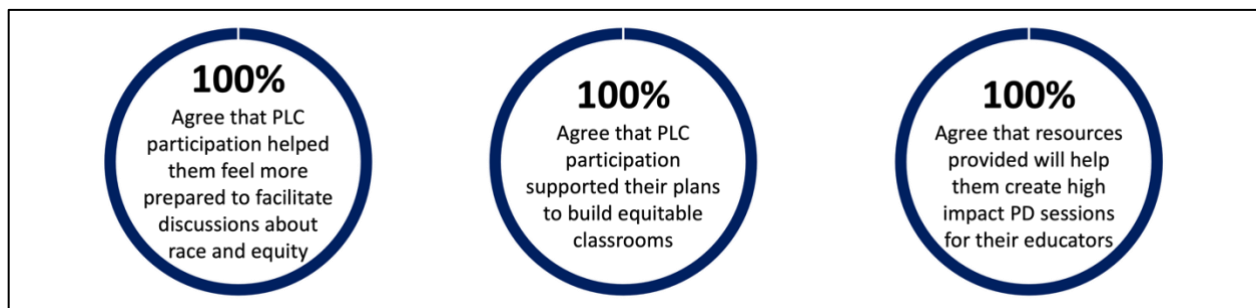*Leader Reports on the Extent to Which PLC Learning Objectives Were Met*

Figure 8

Leader Reports on Satisfaction with PLC Sessions (On a scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree)
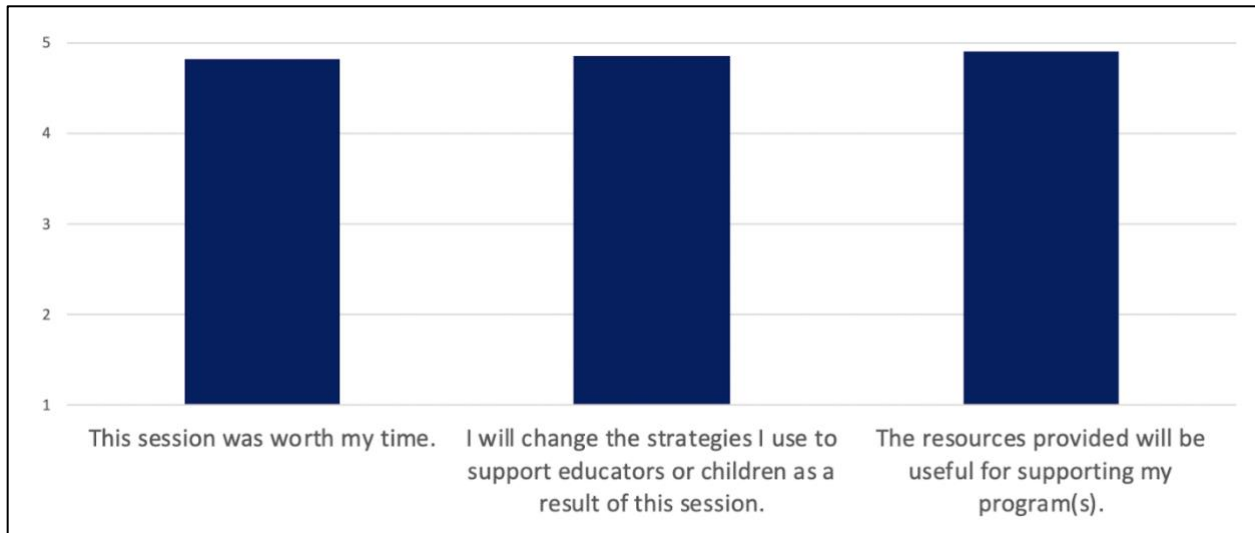

Figure 9

Leader Feedback Examples on Support Provided by PLC Series

> *"This was the best training that I have ever had!"*
>
> *"[I appreciated] the opportunity to talk about important and meaningful topics and getting resources and facilitation tools to help carry the information back to our schools."*
>
> *"I thought you all did a wonderful job with this. It was one of the better PD experiences I've had. Thank you!"*

Leader Outcomes

Participating leaders concluded the series by creating plans for how they would use the provided resources to support educators and children in their programs/the programs they supported. Sample plans are provided in the Appendix in Figure 3.

Key Takeaways for Leader PLCs

1. **PLCs demonstrated promise as a modality for supporting leaders' capacity to utilize resources provided on the ECE Resource Hub to achieve division- or community-level PD goals.** ECE leader participants reported finding the resources beneficial and planned to incorporate elements of what they had learned into support for educators. Most leaders perceived the equity focus to be aligned with their division's or community's broader goals.

2. **Attendance in a recurring monthly meeting at a standard time was challenging.** Although some leaders were able to consistently attend the monthly offerings, many only attended a few sessions. The fact that participation was entirely voluntary and did not count towards any existing requirements for ongoing, job-embedded training may have contributed to this pattern. Future PLC offerings could be incentivized by allowing participation to fulfill existing continuing education requirements for T/TA providers or program leaders, showcasing participation in this or other PD offerings as a part of a program's quality profile, and publicizing such offerings as

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being aligned with specific data-based program goals around inclusion and equity (i.e., programs demonstrating school readiness gaps based on gender, ability status, race, or language spoken in the home).

Other Resources and VQB5 Supports

Overview

In addition to providing direct services, such as coaching teachers and facilitating leader PLCs, CASTL-AEII supported the ECE field through offering online resources, developing resources to support CLASS® data use, and collaborating with other ECE teams around the Commonwealth. These resources helped CASTL-AEII and ECE educators support VQB5 Practice Year 1 implementation.

2021-2022 Website Updates

In 2020-21, CASTL developed the online [Early Childhood Education (ECE) Resource Hub](#) to provide ECE teachers and leaders with access to free, high-quality resources to foster children's social-emotional development. These resources include items covering COVID-19 adaptations; trauma-informed practice; diversity, equity, opportunity, and inclusion; family connections; and books and activities. The site also features a library with over 40 book recommendations and links to read-alouds and accompanying activity guides for each book. The team highlighted a different topic of the month (e.g., Supporting Behavior) and disseminated resources, including discussion and planning guides and classroom instructional videos, to support coaching, self-reflection, and professional development sessions on that topic.

This year, the ECE Resource Hub expanded to include new resources for teachers and families of infants and toddlers. More topics and strategies for birth-to-five teachers and leaders were also added to the website. Educators received a monthly email newsletter with ECE Resource Hub updates and reminders in the VDOE's Readiness Connections email newsletter.

The CASTL-AEII team also developed and added new resources to the [AEII website](#) for birth-to-five teachers and leaders to learn more about the CLASS® tool and CLASS® observations. Some of the new resources developed include a birth-to-five alignment document and a resource that compiles publicly available CLASS® data averages for leaders to compare to their own CLASS® data (see Resource Development section below for more information). The CASTL-AEII team also continued to update the AEII website with resources for supporting local and external CLASS® observations, observation feedback sessions, and professional development.

Between July 1, 2021, and May 31, 2022, there were nearly 50,000 pageviews across the AEII website. The top three most viewed webpages were the "For Conducting Observations" page (over 8,000 views), the PD Workshop Suites page (over 5,500 views), and the AEII website homepage (nearly 5,400 views). During the same time period, there were nearly 31,500 pageviews on the ECE Resource Hub. The three webpages with the most views were the ECE Resource Hub homepage (over 5,500 views), the Fostering Core Skills page (over 3,400 views), and the Strategies page (nearly 3,000 views).

Resource Development

Using feedback and information gathered in collaborations with ECE partners around the Commonwealth, and under the guidance of the VDOE, the CASTL-AEII team developed a number of resources to support quality improvement as part of VQB5. These included resources on the topics shown in Table 6 on the next page.

Table 6
Resources to Support Quality Improvement

Topics	Descriptions of Resources Developed
Building CLASS® knowledge	● Developed CLASS® Tool Summaries for the Infant and Toddler age levels ● Developed a Birth-to-Five Alignment resource showing similarities across the Infant, Toddler, and PreK CLASS® tools ● Expanded CLASS® Self-Assessments to Infant and Toddler age levels ● Designed a flyer to promote teachers' and leaders' use of CLASS® resources to help build foundational CLASS® knowledge ● Translated new and existing resources to Spanish
Understanding and using CLASS® data	● Developed a video module, "Using LinkB5 Data Exports to Guide Professional Development," and a corresponding set of CLASS® data use worksheets (for Infant, Toddler, and PreK age levels) to guide site leaders through the steps of understanding their CLASS® data and using data to plan PD
Promoting accuracy and consistency of local CLASS® data collection	● Developed alignment reports for PDG communities and Ready Regions to help them interpret and visualize trends in local and external CLASS® data collected in 2021-22 ● Provided resources and guidance on strategies for ensuring accurate, consistent measurement among local CLASS® observers
Quality Improvement: interactions, instruction, and curriculum use	● Developed a Toolkit for Leaders to Promote Quality Improvement that provides a directory of resources for leaders to improve quality interactions, curriculum implementation, instruction, and equity and inclusion. The toolkit includes resources developed and sourced by CASTL-AEII (including those listed in the table above), as well as other resources developed and sourced by other Quality Improvement Partners (VECF, T/TACs, ITSN) and the VDOE

Collaborations

Since 2018-19, CASTL-AEII has collaborated with the VDOE and other teams and has worked to develop resources needed in the field. Over time, collaborative networks have grown as CASTL-AEII expanded from VPI to ECSE classrooms and beyond. This year's transition to VQB5 Practice Year 1 brought many new opportunities and increased the need for collaborations across the Commonwealth to work together in supporting quality improvement on a large scale and across diverse settings (i.e., birth-to-five programs in centers, family day homes, and schools).

In 2021-22, the CASTL-AEII team closely collaborated with the VDOE, other early childhood teams at CASTL (VKRP, LinkB5, STREAMin3), fellow Quality Improvement Partners (VECF, T/TACs, ITSN), as well as regional leaders and early childhood agencies. Our team participated in regular meetings (e.g., PDG Office Hours, LinkB5-VDOE meetings, and VDOE Coaching Collaboration) to maintain close communication with regional leaders and to support the efforts of VQB5 Practice Year 1 led by the VDOE, VECF, and LinkB5 teams.

The CASTL-AEII team also hosted three focus groups with Quality Improvement Partners and other early childhood agencies (e.g., Child Care Aware, ReadyKids) to better understand the needs of teachers and leaders, share lessons learned about providing supports, and develop quality improvement resources that best fit the needs of diverse birth-to-five programs.

Additionally, CASTL-AEII worked closely with PDG community leads throughout the school year to coordinate CLASS® observation scheduling, as well as sought feedback on ways to improve the external observation experience for both leaders and teachers. Feedback provided on the external observation process and the CLASS® alignment reports was systematically tracked and will be used to make adjustments for VQB5 Practice Year 2.

Key Takeaways for Resources and VQB5 Supports

1. **The ECE Resource Hub and AEII websites continue to provide useful information for ECE leaders and teachers around the state.** Building off the ECE Resource Hub may be a key mechanism to support the field more broadly.

2. **CASTL-AEII developed and provided needed resources to support CLASS® data use and VQB5 implementation.** In particular, the Toolkit for Leaders to Promote Quality Improvement is a helpful compilation of resources and is scaffolded to support ECE leaders and teachers. The Toolkit will be a key resource for practitioners to use during VQB5 Practice Year 2.

3. **Collaborations with other ECE teams across the Commonwealth were essential to CASTL-AEII's work.** Feedback from collaborations resulted in resource development during VQB5 Practice Year 1 and will be used to modify activities in VQB5 Practice Year 2 in support of high-quality early childhood experiences for all.

5. Looking Ahead to 2022-2023

In partnership with the VDOE, CASTL-AEII will continue to support ECE educators across the Commonwealth of Virginia to provide high-quality early education experiences. As in past years, CASTL-AEII activities will shift as requested by the VDOE with the continuous goal of aligning activities with state and local efforts to support VQB5 across all publicly funded early childhood programs.

In 2022-23, CASTL-AEII will:

- **No longer coordinate external CLASS® observations.** VDOE's new vendor, Teachstone, will conduct the external CLASS® observations. CASTL-AEII will provide support to the VDOE and to Teachstone during the transition period at the end of VQB5 Practice Year 1.

- **Serve high needs classrooms to improve the learning experiences for children through a refined CASTL-AEII Professional Development model, which will include virtual coaching and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) services.** CASTL-AEII will engage in ongoing continuous improvement efforts, referencing data from AEII Coaching and the Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) pilot to modify service delivery to enhance the recruitment, intake, uptake, effectiveness, and feasibility of CASTL-AEII individualized professional development (PD) services.

  CASTL-AEII will provide individualized PD, including social-emotional coaching and early childhood mental health consultation, for select teachers in publicly funded early childhood programs (birth-to-five) to improve children's experiences. We will collaborate with the VDOE, Ready Regions leaders, and VQB5 Quality Improvement Partners to identify the highest needs classrooms, as measured on CLASS®, for individualized coaching for at least 100 birth-to-five classrooms.

  We will coordinate these services with the second year of the Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) pilot. ECMHC services will be provided on a voluntary basis and will consist of classroom-based social-emotional learning (SEL) coaching and child-focused mental health consultation. We will work with the VDOE and other VQB5 Quality Improvement Partners to ensure that intensive services are coordinated, integrated when possible, and distinct.

- **Build upon existing efforts to enhance collaboration across birth-to-five initiatives throughout Virginia**. This collaboration will involve close communication with the VDOE, Ready Regions, VQB5 Quality Improvement Partners, other CASTL ECE initiatives, and program leaders and teachers. Our goal will be to coordinate services across initiatives and providers for maximum effectiveness, alignment, and impact.

- **Collect ongoing implementation data in CASTL-AEII professional development to track referrals and teacher engagement and analyze outcome data to monitor impact.** To understand coaching implementation and outcomes as well as to inform ongoing continuous improvement, CASTL-AEII will collect and/or analyze data through varied methods, including coaching logs, teacher surveys, and teacher exit interviews. We will also analyze changes in teacher-child interactions when data are made available. Implementation data may also be connected to child school readiness data over time to understand how uptake of these professional development supports are linked to child learning. This will allow continued assessment of what is working and what needs adaptation over time to meet the needs of birth-to-five classrooms and improve children's experiences and outcomes across the Commonwealth.

6. Appendix

External CLASS® Observation Data

Table 1
External CLASS® Dimension Descriptive Statistics

CLASS® Tool/Domains	Mean[+]	Standard Deviation	Range
Infant CLASS® **N = 135 observations**			
Relational Climate Dimension Average	5.32	1.15	2.50-7.00
Teacher Sensitivity Dimension Average	5.34	1.15	2.50-7.00
Facilitated Exploration Dimension Average	3.67	1.47	1.25-7.00
Early Learning Support Dimension Average	3.38	1.33	1.00-6.50
Toddler CLASS® **N = 202 observations**			
Positive Climate Dimension Average	5.44	1.14	2.25-7.00
Negative Climate[+] Dimension Average	1.26	0.37	1.00-2.50
Teacher Sensitivity Dimension Average	5.37	1.13	2.25-7.00
Regard for Child Perspectives Dimension	4.62	1.37	1.25-7.00
Behavior Guidance Dimension Average	4.67	1.31	1.00-7.00
Facilitation of Learning and Development	3.64	1.21	1.25-7.00
Quality of Feedback Dimension Average	2.35	1.06	1.00-6.25
Language Modeling Dimension Average	3.24	1.10	1.00-6.75
PreK CLASS® **N = 330 observations**			
Positive Climate Dimension Average	5.64	1.09	2.00-7.00
Negative Climate[+] Dimension Average	1.18	0.36	1.00-3.25
Teacher Sensitivity Dimension Average	5.60	1.12	2.25-7.00

CLASS® Tool/Domains (continued)	Mean[+]	Standard Deviation	Range
Regard for Student Perspectives Dimension	4.71	1.27	1.50-7.00
Behavior Management Dimension Average	5.66	1.16	2.00-7.00
Productivity Dimension Average	5.82	1.04	1.25-7.00
Instructional Learning Formats Dimension	4.85	1.16	1.50-7.00
Concept Development Dimension Average	2.12	0.89	1.00-4.75
Quality of Feedback Dimension Average	2.53	1.08	1.00-6.25
Language Modeling Dimension Average	3.23	1.16	1.00-6.00

+Note: Negative Climate is reverse scored, with higher scores indicating more negativity and lower quality interactions.

Table 2
External CLASS® Domain Descriptive Statistics for ECSE[3] Classrooms

CLASS® Tool/Domains[+]	Mean[+]	Standard Deviation	Range
Infant CLASS® **N = 0 observations**			
Responsive Caregiving Domain Average	N/A	N/A	N/A
Infant Total Dimension Average	**N/A**	**N/A**	**N/A**
Toddler CLASS® **N = 4 observations**			
Emotional and Behavioral Support Domain Average	6.10	0.29	5.85 – 6.47
Engaged Support for Learning Domain Average	4.33	0.72	3.33 – 5.00
Toddler Total Dimension Average	**5.44**	**0.40**	**4.94 – 5.92**
PreK CLASS® **N = 29 observations**			

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[3] ECSE classrooms included classrooms that had more than 50% of students with IEPs, as well as classrooms that self-identified as ECSE in the classroom name.

Emotional Support Domain Average	5.87	0.64	3.75 – 6.81
Classroom Organization Domain Average	5.60	0.79	3.25 – 6.89
Instructional Support Domain Average	2.52	0.78	1.00 – 4.66
PreK Total Dimension Average	**4.78**	**0.66**	**2.78 – 6.17**

Table 3

External CLASS® Domain Descriptive Statistics for DLL[4] Classrooms

CLASS® Tool/Domains[+]	Mean[+]	Standard Deviation	Range
Infant CLASS® **N = 9 observations**			
Responsive Caregiving Domain Average	4.94	0.83	3.69 – 5.88
Infant Total Dimension Average	**4.94**	**0.83**	**3.69 – 5.88**
Toddler CLASS® **N = 23 observations**			
Emotional and Behavioral Support Domain Average	5.40	0.97	3.60 – 6.80
Engaged Support for Learning Domain Average	2.95	0.98	1.75 – 5.34
Toddler Total Dimension Average	**4.48**	**0.92**	**2.91 – 6.09**
PreK CLASS® **N = 29 observations**			
Emotional Support Domain Average	5.41	0.96	3.50 – 7.00
Classroom Organization Domain Average	4.93	1.23	1.58 – 6.84
Instructional Support Domain Average	2.18	0.98	1.00 – 5.08
PreK Total Dimension Average	**4.30**	**0.95**	**2.33 – 6.35**

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[4] DLL classrooms included classrooms that indicated in LinkB5 that at least 2 languages were spoken in the classroom, as well as classrooms that indicated only Spanish was spoken in the classroom. If classrooms indicated at least 2 languages were spoken in the classroom, it did not necessarily mean that those languages were used for instructional purposes.

Virtual Coaching for Teachers

Figure 1
Sample Coaching Action Plan

TOPIC: Supporting Children's Emotions

Goal: I will teach calm-down strategies in small groups 3x a week and practice the strategies with all children over the next two weeks.
Due: 5/13/2022

Intentional Practice from Self-Assessment:
I teach calm-down strategies and practice them with children before they are upset.

Action Steps:
1. **VIDEO**:
   Record Video of Goal Implementation and Upload to TORSH by 5/9/2022
2. **SELF-CARE**:
   I will refill my water bottle at least 3 times each day during the work day.
3. **LEARN:**
   o Core Skills Summary Sheet: Children's Emotions
   o Calm Down Cards
   o Tucker Turtle Technique
   o Tucker Turtle Story
4. **PRACTICE:**
   Introduce and practice strategies for calming down your body
   o Use the Tucker Turtle Technique visual chart
   o Practice taking deep breaths
   o Tense and loosen muscles
   o Shake it out to music or without music
   o Introduce and visit a quiet, soft place in the room

Figure 2
Sample Coaching Action Plan Goals for Select Coaching Topics

Preschool Action Plan Goals

Building Teacher-Child Relationships
- For the next 2 weeks, I will spend 10 minutes playing with a different child during Center Time.

Supporting Emotions
- I will help all children recognize and describe their emotions in various learning settings over the next 2 weeks.

Infant/Toddler Action Plan Goals

Building Teacher-Child Relationships
- I will provide opportunities for children to greet each other, or I will model greeting children each day for the next 2 weeks.

Supporting Emotions
- I will warn children when a transition is about to occur and provide a concrete event/activity to transition to during center time for the next 2 weeks.

Professional Learning Communities for Program Leaders

Figure 3

Sample Leader Action Plans for Use of Shared Resources from the ECE Resource Hub Following PLC Sessions

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Sample 1

Goal: To build awareness of the pervasiveness of bias and use classroom libraries and intentional practices to support positive experiences of inclusivity for each and every child.

Actions:

Step 1. BEFORE THE FIRST PD SESSION Build awareness by taking bias quizzes independently and identifying our implicit biases before we meet together so teachers can all see how this topic relates to us as individual people.

Step 2. DURING THE FIRST PD SESSION Watch Windows and Mirrors TEDTalk together and discuss how to take action, why this is important, and how it relates to the bias quizzes. Provide the "diverse bookfinder" link to help teachers replenish their classroom libraries.

Step 3. DURING THE FIRST OR SECOND PD SESSION Follow up with small group trainings where educators come up with actionable equitable strategies such as using clothespins to track who they have called on and notice anyone who is left out and/or patterns in who is being invited to speak and who is not.

Step 4. AFTER THE PD SESSION As homework, educators think of specific actions they can take in their classrooms to balance the windows and mirrors that children have. Look at their materials to ensure that they reflect all children all year round.

Sample 2

Goal: To understand how classroom books can be used to disrupt the negative impacts of bias in the classroom.

· Core skill connections: Supporting Sense of Self / Fostering Empathy

· CLASS® connection: PC / CD

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the powerful messages that the books on our shelves send to children about who they are and how they can relate to others.

2. Analyze classroom books to determine how they are providing mirrors for self-reflections and windows into the larger world for every child.

3. Plan book readings that intentionally support children to develop a sense of self and empathy skills.

Actions:

Step 1. BEFORE THE FIRST PD SESSION Request that teachers bring their 3 favorite books that they share with children in their class.

Step 2. DURING THE FIRST PD SESSION Show Grace Lin's The Windows and Mirrors of a Child's Bookshelf TEDTalk.

· After discussing the TEDTalk, ask teachers to share their thoughts on any of the books that they chose.

· Use guiding questions 1-4 (ask question 4 first) for reflection.

· Print out and share pp.2-3 of the Guiding Questions as a planning form during our meeting.

- Using Preschool SOLs and the Diverse Book finder, develop a list of books that would be appropriate for use with your class.

Step 3: AFTER THE FIRST PD SESSION: Educators walk through their classrooms and remove all books that contain stereotypes or that misrepresent groups of people in any way from your class library. Add books that positively reflect children's identities and experiences as well as books that positively and accurately represent people who look or live differently than they do.

Step 4. AFTER THE FIRST PD SESSION: Establish an Equity Committee to identify equity gaps in our school.

Step 5. ONGOING WORK: Have a book of the month during library time where the whole school focuses on the same equity principal /SEL related.