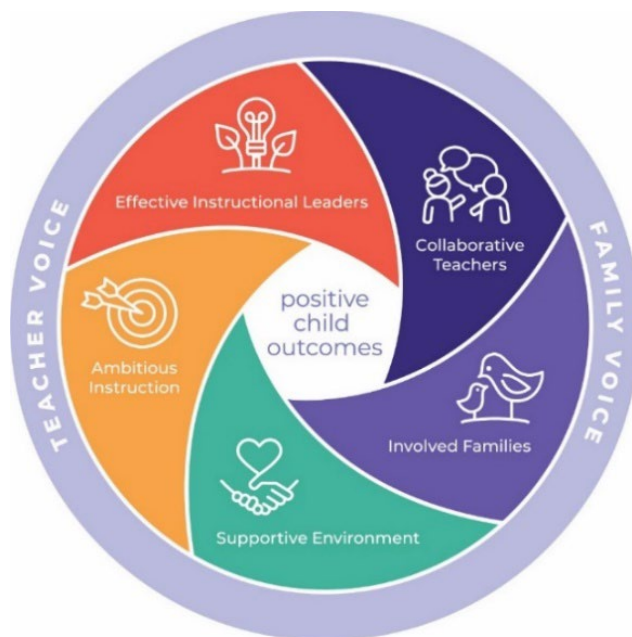# Overview

The Start Early Essentials organizational framework is rooted in school improvement research and the 5Essentials framework and surveys, which is a powerful K-12 measurement tool with over 25 years of research supporting the finding that organizational climate and conditions are strongly linked to improvements overtime in teaching and students' learning.[i] Research shows that strong Essential 0-5 Survey scores are associated with stronger professional learning and commitment, higher CLASS scores, and student attendance.[ii] Qualitative research contrasts teacher, staff, and parent lived-experiences with these essentials when they are strongly organized versus weakly organized.[iii]

The impact of The Essentials extends beyond the classroom. Start Early equips early childhood leaders to create systems and routines that support continuous learning and quality improvement efforts by all staff. With this approach, professionals can transform their organizations over time into effective, high-performing programs that prepare children for kindergarten. Decades of education research has found that effective leaders who build learning opportunities into the day-to-day work are the key drivers of improvements in early childhood programs.

Proposal

This proposal is for the renewal of The Essential 0-5 Survey and additional supports to Pre-K 4 San Antonio for a third year.

THE FOLLOWING COMPONENTS ARE INCLUDED IN EACH IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ESSENTIAL 0-5 SURVEY:

Online Survey Administration

- Online teacher/staff survey – all early childhood teachers and staff are encouraged to complete the survey.
- Online family survey – available in English and Spanish
- One (1) live introductory webinar for all Site Leaders and Survey Coordinators to explain what the Essential 0-5 Survey is, why The Essentials are important and how to have a successful survey administration with staff and families.
- Survey administration manuals (includes administration and recruitment best practices)

- Narrated PowerPoint that Site Leaders and Survey Coordinators can share with teachers and staff to introduce The Essentials.

- Recruitment flyers and communication templates for Teachers, Staff and Families with motivational messages to complete the survey, important dates and instructions, etc.

- **Requirements**: centers must have 4 or more classrooms, centers must meet response rate threshold to receive report, PreK 4 SA must provide childcare center information including teacher names and email addresses and number of families at each center. See Appendix A: Survey Administration Technical Inclusions & Requirements

Data Visualizations & Reports

- Online reporting and data visualization system for each site.

- Downloadable, printable reports.

- Reports will include year over year trends for site that receive a second year of data.

Data Use and Improvement Tools

- Continued access to electronic copy of a five-module workbook for Site Leaders and Teachers/Staff to collectively review and discuss the data, and then plan, do, study and act on the data to drive improvement. Data Use and Improvement Tools include:
    - Leadership Reflection and Data Dialogue
    - Staff Reflection and Data Dialogue
    - Root Cause Analysis and Rapid Improvement Cycle Planning
    - 30-day Check-in of the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) Cycle
    - Year-End Reflections and Connections

- Facilitation Guide for Site Leaders that accompanies the Data Use and Improvement Tools and guides the leader through best practices for successfully facilitating collaborative sessions with teachers and staff.

Planning and Implementation Technical Assistance

- Regular technical assistance with agency leaders to plan and support the implementation of The Essential 0-5 Survey, including onboarding and integrating the child care sites into a future implementation.

- Technical Assistance sessions to explore how PreK for SA can further collaborate with and support partner sites.

THE FOLLOWING COMPONENTS ARE AVAILABLE AT AN ADDITIONAL COST:

Professional Learning & Improvement Supports

- 6-8 Technical Assistance sessions to leader from Practice Consultant.

- Continued support to help with applying data from year one and two to drive program

improvement at both organizational and site leadership levels.

- Exploration of how to onboard/train coaches and other instructional leadership staff in supporting Survey implementation and aligning coaching cycles with improvement goals.

Proposed Timeline

Full Scope - August 1, 2022- June 30, 2023

- September - Kick Off Meeting to confirm scope, roles, responsibilities and ways of working
- January - Complete Site & Teacher Rosters Due (6-8 weeks before survey window)
- February – Orientation for leaders and key stakeholders (4-6 weeks before survey window)
- February 28 – March 24 - Survey Window (recommend 4 weeks open; at least 45 – 60 days AFTER the program year begins)
- May - Reports Shared with Agency Leadership ; Start Early meets with agency team to unpack and reflect on the data.
- May - Reports Shared with Site Leaders (8 weeks after survey window closes)
- June and ongoing– Agency support leaders to implement data use and improvement toolkit routines

Roles & Responsibilities

PreK 4 SA

- ✓ Strategic Lead – Set vision, champion project, marshal resources, remove obstacles, make decisions
- ✓ Project Manager – Lead day to day survey implementation in partnership with SE. Manage timeline, gather information, communicate with and orient leaders and teachers
- ✓ Professional Development Supports – Adopt data use toolkit and support leaders to put data into action (e.g. facilitate PLC)
- ✓ Site Leaders – Champion survey at site, provide roster data, communicate "why and what" to teachers and families, facilitate data use improvement work sessions
- ✓ Teachers – Complete survey, participate in data use improvement work sessions
- ✓ Families – Complete survey

Start Early

- ✓ Program Manager – Manage scope, timeline and deliverables, communicate with constituents, organize and facilitate planning meetings

- ✓ Early Childhood Practice Consultant – Provide strategic guidance to embed framework and practices into organization's way of working, support organization to implement PD supports with leaders

- ✓ Customer Engagement – Provide technical support, if needed, to access survey administration supports or data use toolkits via LMS

- ✓ UChicago Impact – Subcontractor to Start Early, administers survey via online platform, scores, compiles and shares reports

Price

THE ESSENTIAL 0-5 SURVEY YEAR THREE RENEWAL

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION	✓
REPORTS	✓
IMPLEMENTATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	✓
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING & IMPROVEMENT SUPPORTS	✓
10% DISCOUNT FOR THIRD YEAR IMPLEMENTATION	✓
ESTIMATED PRICE	$ 35,000

Rationale for Implementing Early Education Essentials with K – 2nd grades

During the 1990s and 2000s, researchers at the University of Chicago developed a school improvement framework and corresponding survey instrument to inform continuous improvement efforts of schools and districts. This work, now referred to as The 5Essentials, was initially focused on elementary schools but has subsequently expanded to survey and support the full K-12 system, including surveys of students. Based on this work, researchers from Start Early collaborated with researchers at the University of Chicago to develop The Early Education Essentials, a framework and set of surveys based on The 5Essentials but designed for early childhood.

The Early Education Essentials teacher/staff survey is comprised of content directly from the 5Essentials (70% of the content) and additional content that was developed specifically for the early childhood sector (30% of the content). The parent survey is new and focuses on measuring relational, trust, and inclusion aspects of parents affiliation and experience with a school, rather than perceptions related to grade-specific pedagogy. The surveys were validated in preschool and PreK classrooms. However, we know that education, especially at the early grades, is really a continuum. As such, over the past year, we have tested the additional 30% of the survey items developed specifically for the Early Education Essentials with Kindergarten teachers and found that these items are reliable for kindergarten teachers because they did not respond differently or in unexpected ways to the items than their PreK peers.

To date, however, these additional items, representing 30% of the items on the Early Education Essentials teacher survey and all items on the parent survey, have not been administered to or tested with 1st and 2nd grade teachers, staff, and parents. However, based on the testing above with kindergarten, we believe that school settings operate reasonably similarly for 1st and 2nd grades as they do for preschool and Kindergarten such that inclusion of their responses to these items will not undermine the technical adequacy of the surveys. We will continue examining this in the years ahead using responses collected in survey administrations that incorporate 1st and 2nd grade teachers and staff.

For program and school improvement efforts (not accountability), we recommend implementing the Early Education Essentials, PreK – 2nd in the two elementary schools that are part of PreK 4 SA's initiative. One improvement framework will support a coherent theory of action across grades and sites and one metric will standardize how PreK 4 SA gathers perception data from teachers, staff, and parents across grade levels.

Appendix A: Survey Administration Technical Inclusions & Requirements

1. **Survey Administration**
   A. Center Rosters[1]
      i. Start Early and UChicago Impact will work directly with the customer to acquire rosters in the correct format for teachers / staff for the survey administration. Start Early will provide a template to enter roster information (list of centers, teachers, email, grade level, etc.). Delays compiling the roster or errors in the roster data may result in delays to opening the survey window or delivering reports. Parents are not rostered; however, a parent count will be required from each center. Although it is called a "parent" survey, if a child has a different type of guardian (e.g. grandparent, aunt, etc.), this person may complete the survey. One "parent" per child is expected to complete the survey.
   B. Survey Coordinators
      i. In addition to the center leaders, the Customer should designate a coordinator to assist with the administration of the survey and support the overall roll out and implementation across and within centers. The center leaders and coordinator will receive a short manual detailing their roles and responsibilities for survey administration.
   C. Teacher Survey Administration
      i. Teachers / staff will access the survey using a randomly assigned PIN and password issued by the online Survey Administration Module. The survey will be available to all teacher/staff. Teachers/staff have the ability to skip any question they do not wish to answer, but are encouraged to answer all the questions as their responses will be confidential.
   D. Parent Survey Administration
      i. Parents will be invited to access the survey online using an anonymous login. Parents will select which center they are responding for and enter basic demographic information before responding to content questions. Parents have the right to skip any question they do not wish to answer, but are encouraged to answer all the questions as their responses will be confidential. The parent survey will utilize the same survey administration window as teachers/staff.
   E. Response Rate Monitoring
      i. The Survey Administration Tool will be accessible to the customer, survey coordinator and center leaders and provides real time updates on teacher and parent response rates by centers. The Tool allows users to log in to check response rates at any time. The Tool reports aggregate response rates by center, not the names of individuals who have responded.
2. **Scoring**
   A.   Impact will score survey data using a scoring process that is the intellectual property of the University of Chicago. The Essential 0-5 Survey scoring creates center-level scores for Essentials and Measures using Rasch Analysis and also produces item frequencies for each survey question. Scoring allows center results to be compared from one year to the next. To protect anonymity, center results will only be provided when centers meet the minimum threshold required for reporting.

3. **Reporting**
   A.   Reports will be available on a password protected basis to Customer and center leadership approximately 6 - 8 weeks after the survey window closes. The final

release date to centers will be determined by the Customer in partnership with Start Early.

B. Each center receives an individual, web-based report that offers a comprehensive picture of center quality, teacher / staff mindsets and experiences of organizational conditions, and provides a framework for understanding the survey questions. The reports include the elements below.

      i. Performance on the Essential 0-5 Survey, shown in color-coded, easy to read diagrams.

      ii. Changes in center performance over time on individual Measures and Essentials, after the first year (if year over year data is collected).

      iii. A 1-year license to access reports online. Upon renewal each year, center will receive an additional year of access.

C. Access a sample demo report here: https://5-essentials.org/demo/ece/2020/

D. In order to receive center level reports containing teacher/staff data, centers must meet a 50% response rate threshold or have at least six (6) eligible teacher / staff respondents per center, whichever is higher. To support the minimum requirement, all teachers and staff with direct engagement with preschool students and/or their families can participate, not just teachers. In order to receive data on each measure, this response rate threshold applies. It is possible to have six teachers or 50% of teachers respond to survey items, but if teachers skip certain items it may mean a center doesn't receive data on all measures.

E. In order to receive center level reports containing parent data, centers must meet a 25% response rate threshold or have at least 15 eligible parent respondents per center, whichever is higher. Although it is called a "parent" survey, if a child has a different type of guardian (e.g. grandparent, aunt, etc.), this person may complete the survey. One "parent" per child is expected to complete the survey.

F. Start Early will provide a survey administration manual, which includes best practices for getting high response rates that will lead to complete and high quality reports. Start Early will provide support throughout the engagement to encourage high response rates. However, it is the responsibility of the Customer to carry out the best practices listed in the manual, monitor response rates during the survey window and ensure that the response rate thresholds are met.

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[i] University of Chicago Consortium on School Research, https://consortium.uchicago.edu/publications/first-look-5essentials-illinois-schools

[ii] Ehrlich, S.B., Pacchiano, D.M., Stein, A.G., & Wagner, M.R. (2018). Early Ed Essentials: Testing new surveys to inform program improvement. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Consortium on School Research and Start Early.
Full Report: https://www.theounce.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Organizing-Early-Education-Validation-Mar2018-Consortium-Ounce.pdf
Snapshot: https://www.theounce.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Early-Ed-Essentials-Snapshot-Mar2018-Ounce-Consortium.pdf

[iii] Pacchiano, D.M., Wagner, M.R., & Lewandowski, H., with Ehrlich, S.B. & Stein, A.G. (2018). Early Education Essentials: Illustrations of Strong Organizational Practices in Programs Poised for Improvement. Chicago, IL: Start Early of Prevention Fund and the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research. Full Report: https://www.theounce.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/18-1-Ounce-Early-Ed-Report-Final-web-Single-Pgs.pdf

Snapshot: https://www.theounce.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/18-1-Ounce-Early-Ed-Snapshot-Final-web-Single-Pgs.pdf