

EFMC PLAYS across the MCSD

Purposeful Language Acquisition Yields Success

Even though the EFMC PLAYS project was not able to be executed during the fourth quarter of the school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the results achieved up until that point are very encouraging. Positive results were seen in student attendance, behavior, social/emotional learning, problem-solving, collaboration, cooperation, and communication. Increases in levels of play, reading readiness scores, oral language development, and student engagement were also recorded. Thank you to Impact 100 Martin members for the opportunity to bring this program to all kindergarten classes across the Martin County School District.

Spring iReady assessments were not taken by students due to school closures from COVID-19.

Percentage of Students Scoring At or Above Grade Level on iReady Reading Assessment			
School	SY 19-20		
	Fall	Winter	Spring
Bessey Creek Elementary	33%	76%	N/A
Citrus Grove Elementary	44%	81%	N/A
Crystal Lake Elementary	24%	66%	N/A
Felix A. Williams Elementary	29%	67%	N/A
Hobe Sound Elementary	30%	67%	N/A
Jensen Beach Elementary	31%	73%	N/A
J.D. Parker School of Science, Math & Technology	18%	63%	N/A
Palm City Elementary	36%	63%	N/A
Port Salerno Elementary	8%	35%	N/A
Pinewood Elementary	25%	57%	N/A
SeaWind Elementary	20%	67%	N/A
Warfield Elementary	11%	43%	N/A

Student Behavior

While there were many reported, here are a few success stories reported by teachers relating to student behavior.

- I am often a teacher who has one (or more) students with pretty intense behaviors. PLAYS is often a HUGE time for success with these kiddos. They learn kindness and patience. Seeing them drop their angry exterior to imagine and play with their peers is my favorite. PLAYS gives students who are struggling academically a place to feel successful at school. Sometimes just having one area that is a strength creates more areas of strength! Weaving our PLAYS theme through the day keeps behavior students hungry for what's next and often makes them forget they are actually learning. Love PLAYS.

- I think it is so fun to hear the children "correcting" each other's behavior!! I would hear "That's not how you are supposed to act in a restaurant!"
- According to mom, a moderate to severe speech student would fight or get into trouble quite a bit in pre-school. With combination of P.L.A.Y and a feelings chart to this student learned to "play" appropriately and work out his feelings One arrived crying. P.L.A.Y encouraged her to come to school, smile and love school.
- My most reluctant students love PLAYS time!
- PLAYS increased my students' patience with each other. By having scheduled roles they enjoyed and looked forward to their interactions.
- My students this year were all very chatty. Using PLAYS they learned how to take turns talking and listening. It was a big step for us!
- It by far was my student's favorite part of the day, and they really looked forward to it. It was wonderful to see how certain kids were able to lead their groups in certain roles.
- My timid, quiet students enjoyed "becoming" a new character(Vet) and talked, was engaged and took on the roll of Vet with confidence!
- A student really came around to learning how to share.
- I definitely saw their play get better in the short time we used it. They were learning to do their role and talking things out. - We had our moments but they were definitely growing.
- I received a behavior student- through PLAYS the kids showed and taught him how to communicate and share with one another. I saw a huge change with him.
- My goal for this past school year was to see improvement in the area of teamwork and partner work. I used play with the roles to demonstrate how a group with specific roles can work well together. We had many discussions about the importance of others ideas and sharing. These are difficult skills for 5 year old children but play is such a positive time of day and it helped to make the hard work of teamwork successful.
- One of my most hesitant learners was always the most engaged student during PLAYS time. He loved dressing up and really got into the roles he was assigned. I never saw him as excited as I did during this time of our day.
- Not only did students behave better during the PLAYS time, but because of PLAYS and the language skills learned, they were able to resolve problems outside of the PLAYS time. Students would also continue their roles from the day at their own free play time.
- Students are overall motivated to behave and take turns during play -- they don't want to waste precious PLAYS time fighting! I see negotiation skills starting to develop!
- My students, in general, got so much better at sharing materials with each other and taking turns. In addition, they were getting better at playing WITH each other, instead of just alongside each other.
- I noticed that students were able to both follow the structure but ALSO be flexible.
- The students learned so quickly how to socialize the proper way! They began to use manners, be considerate and to share!
- My little EL students with little to no language I saw a huge increase of language over the course of the year. I loved the fact I saw my students learning to problem solve with the tools which is hard for kindergarten to do. It is a wonderful program. Students love it. It is a favorite in our class. Thank you so much for providing this to our students.

- I just remember a Hispanic boy dressed in the policeman uniform and how it brought out the vocabulary in him...he became vocal!
- Yes! My two English language learners really blossomed within the PLAYS unit, and the other students were so supportive of them.

Tardiness/Leaving Early/Attendance

Teachers also reported a decrease in tardiness for those who implemented the program first thing in the morning. Those teachers who held their 30 minutes EFMC PLAYS time during the end of the day reported a decrease in students leaving early for the day.

Here's a few comments from teachers. More can be provided upon request.

- My class did ours towards the end of the day, and I definitely had less people leave early because they didn't want to miss that time.
- Yes, tardiness definitely improved!! They didn't want to miss PLAYS!!
- Yes! Absolutely!
- Yes, I had about 4-5 students coming into class tardy but since we start our PLAYS in the morning time they cannot wait to get to school so they do not miss this time. Yeah!!!!
- Yes, one of my ELL students started school mid-year and would either miss school all together or arrive crying. PLAYS encouraged her to come to school, smile and love school.
- My students are excited about PLAYS and never want to leave at the end of the day! Creating students so passionate in their LOVE for school is definitely a SUCCESS!
- One student was very leisurely and social in the cafeteria in the mornings when the bell rang. When the student arrived in the classroom to find she was too late for PLAYS -- she started arriving on time from then on!!
- Yes, having PLAYS first thing in the morning motivated some students to come early.
- I had a child who was chronically late-- that changed when we started PLAYS-- and my kids loved finding out what the new kit for the following week would be.
- I noticed particular benefit for the children who don't have a plethora of toys at home. Just to be able to manipulate and see such variety.

Teachers also reported an increase in language development due to student participation in the EFMC PLAYS program. Here's a few highlights...

- I posted many new vocabulary words that I had either taught through the books or words that we came up with together. So often the children would refer to those vocabulary charts during academic lessons saying "remember, we learned that word and what it means." I loved to hear them actually using the "grown up" vocabulary in their everyday activities, even outside of PLAYS!

- Vocabulary definitely was improved and their understanding and relationship to different topics. They may have never been to a Diner but now they have!
- As the school year went on I noticed that the more shy students became more vocal and interacted with others at a much deeper level and were able to form valuable bonds together.
- It definitely helped my speech students!
- A student from another country with a strong dialect, spoke easily with others in his group, improving his social connection through acquiring new vocabulary words.
- I loved linking PLAYS to other subject areas- ELA, interactive writing etc. The students would create pictures about PLAYS during choice time. They loved writing about the different experiences. They were so excited each week to find out what bin we were getting! :)
- Overall, I saw improvement in all students. I was proud that the solitary/parallel level that I noticed happening at the beginning of the year...improved to associative level by Spring Break.
- I think assigning the roles helped the ELL students and the shy students to venture out more. If they were ordering ice cream, they had to speak up. :)
- With me introducing the vocabulary on Monday and going over it daily before they go off to play and also by displaying the vocabulary on a chart they can refer or use it in the language to each other, I have seen a big improvement in the expansion of their vocabulary knowledge
- Students learned some great functional play skills and social scripts
- My quiet students who don't like to talk really love to play and are the biggest speakers during this time.
- The beginning of the year kinders compared to the end of the year kinders are night & day. The start of school, we have a group that isn't even really talking to each other. PLAYS gives them an opportunity for their guard to come down and the words start flowing.
- Some of the quiet students were the most involved and most talkative during play time.
- I was able to introduce so many new concepts with vocabulary that I wouldn't have been able to without this program. I KNOW my ELL students especially benefited from this program.
- This most definitely helped some of my students who had language delays. They felt more comfortable talking with each other during PLAYS time.
- One of my students who is both ELL and a speech student started off the year speaking very little. By January, he was an active participant during PLAYS time, using his words to communicate with his peers.
- My non-English speaking student deepened his English language skills using vocabulary learned in videos and books in order to communicate with friends in their group.
- My LY student began to participate in the small group setting and could copy the language of his peers.
- Many of my students came in to school this year with little to no English. Some students didn't understand how to hold conversation or take a lead role in play. Throughout the year, these students learned from their peers and were able to learn not only how to pretend play and hold conversation, but they were able to learn how to do it in English.

More kindergarten teacher comments

- My favorite story from this year was when one group was really trying hard to make sure everyone had a turn and was having fair time with the materials. They were playing with the baby care kit and the "mom and dad" left the "babysitters" with the babies while they went out to dinner. The "babysitters" were needing more time with the dolls, so the "dad" faked a choking episode at the restaurant and had to go to the hospital. They called from the ambulance letting the "babysitters" know they would be a while. ;)
- Caring for babies brought some super cute moments into our classroom. Seeing how gentle the kids were with their "babies" was precious!
- Students really learned how to work together as a team and support each other in their assigned roles. This became more evident as the year went on and they realized, they would each get a turn in each role.
- Great way to improve social and emotional skills.
- I teach in an IND unit, and 4 of my more verbal students were able to join general ed kinder classes. I loved giving them that time with typical peers. They loved helping their kindergarten friends.
- I learned a lot about my students this year having this designated time to talk with them and hear them relate the theme to their personal lives.
- PLAYS helped one boy to play with others. At the beginning he didn't want to talk to other members of his groups
- I'm at a Title 1 school and all of my student's language acquisition grew. This class got a long very well with each other and I know it had a lot to do with PLAYS.
- Love it. We enjoyed everything. Well needed curriculum in kindergarten.
- PLAYS gave my 7 ELL students a nice opportunity to talk with the other children.
- I truly also enjoyed the science lab and mixing food color and water so the children could make new colors! They enjoyed the opportunity to pour water because children are seldom allowed to pour at home!
- My students were so wonderful with the Caring for Babies kit. They were very careful with the babies and came up with some innovative ways to use our classroom furniture to make strollers and beds for the babies. It was so sweet!
- My kids loved PLAYS! They would come in on Mondays and ask what bin was for the week. Kids talked about it at home with their families. One student wanted Chinese food one night because that was the bin we were playing with and even knew to order lo-mein.
- It was so inspiring to see my littles interact and enjoy authentic learning through play. The kits were awesome and engaging and they learned so much (friendships, problem solving, taking initiative, leadership roles, and general knowledge learned from books and the toys provided were my favorite parts of the year and program.
- At the end of each rotation, the students were sad to see the kits go. They would complain that they had not finished "learning" with their kit. They also would ponder about things learned, and want to know more about topics. We watched so many dog show and agility videos after the dog show kit.

Schools	Q1 Average	Q2 Average	Q3 Average	Gains	Q4 Average
Bessey Creek	5.5	5.7	5.7	0.2	Not available due to school closure
Citrus Grove	4.1	4.6	5.2	1.1	Not available due to school closure
Crystal Lake	3.3	3.7	4.6	1.3	Not available due to school closure
Felix A. Williams	3.4	3.8	4.8	1.4	Not available due to school closure
Hobe Sound	4.6	4.9	5.4	0.8	Not available due to school closure
Hope Center	2	2.2	3	1	Not available due to school closure
Jensen Beach	3.5	4.2	4.9	1.4	Not available due to school closure
JD Parker	4.3	4.6	4.8	0.5	Not available due to school closure
Palm City	4	4.5	4.9	0.9	Not available due to school closure
Pinewood	3.7	4.4	4.7	1	Not available due to school closure
Port Salerno	4	4.2	5	1	Not available due to school closure
Seawind	3.2	3.9	4.5	1.3	Not available due to school closure
Warfield	3.6	3.8	4.2	0.6	Not available due to school closure
					Not available due to school closure
District Average	3.784615385	4.192307692	4.746153846	0.961538462	Not available due to school closure

GAINS from 1st quarter to 3rd quarter

PLAYS Assessment Rubric

Level	Actions	Language
6 Cooperative Play	Make a plan.	Discuss & negotiate how roles will work.
	Compromise	Calm negotiation.
	Role-play/Dramatize Scenarios	Language that is task specific to role or scenario.
5 Associative Play	Play together with same materials or activity but do own work.	Discuss play and how they are each doing it.
	Share materials.	Use appropriate words for sharing. (Please, asking friends and thank you)
4 Parallel Play	Plays along side one another. Could use same materials, but have different goals.	Tell each other what they are doing.
3 Solitary Play	Plays alone or near a group.	Talking to themselves during play.
2 Onlooker Behavior	Observes others in play - does not play.	May ask others questions about their play.
1 Unoccupied Behavior	Randomly observes anything that catches their interest or will engage in fidgeting or repetitive behavior.	Makes random utterances.

Teachers reported a significant improvement in levels of play and language during the time the students were able to participate in EFMC PLAYS. It is likely the students would have increased to the top two levels based on the rubric above, if they had been able to continue the program for the remainder of the school year.