

PFA Teacher Characteristics

Erikson Institute • SRI International • Illinois State Board of Education

This fact sheet summarizes findings from the Illinois Preschool for All (PFA) program evaluation conducted by Erikson Institute and SRI International. PFA programs are funded by the Illinois State Board of Education to provide early education opportunities for children between the ages of three and five, with priority given to children from low-income families and those who are determined to be “at risk.” The evaluation took an in-depth look at PFA programs throughout the state (excluding the city of Chicago) from 2008 through 2010 to provide a picture of PFA program quality, children’s school readiness, and the characteristics of program participants.

Who are the lead teachers in Illinois’s Preschool for All (PFA) programs?

The Preschool for All (PFA) evaluation collected information from teachers and administrators about teachers’ demographics, their preparedness to teach, their professional development needs, and their attitudes about their jobs.

PFA lead teachers are predominantly white, female, 30 years old or older, and English-speaking.

- The majority of lead teachers (93%) are white, and 99% of lead teachers are female.
- Three-fourths (75%) are 30 or older, and almost half (44%) are 40 or older.

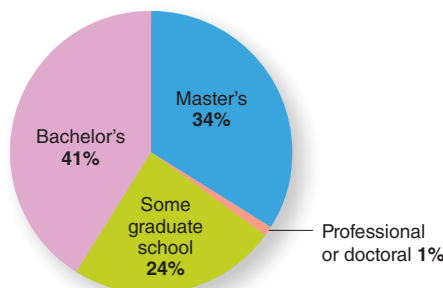
- Almost all teachers (99%) speak English as their primary language. A small percentage (5%) of teachers can speak Spanish fluently.

PFA programs have qualified and experienced teachers.

All lead teachers hold a bachelor’s degree and a Type 04 teaching certificate, and approximately one-third of teachers (34%) have a master’s degree. More than half of teachers (61%) have six or more years of experience teaching preschool. The majority of teachers (83%) earned their highest degree in an education-related field, and more than half of teachers (60%) earned their highest degree in early childhood education.

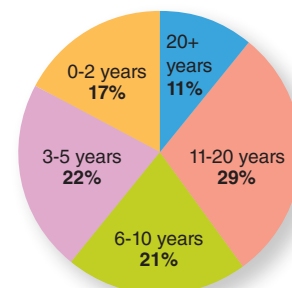
Education Levels of PFA Lead Teachers

Source: Teacher surveys (n=150)



Years of Preschool Teaching Experience of PFA Lead Teachers

Source: Teacher surveys (n=150)



Most PFA teachers believe they are prepared to teach the curriculum, but some report being less prepared to teach diverse populations of children.

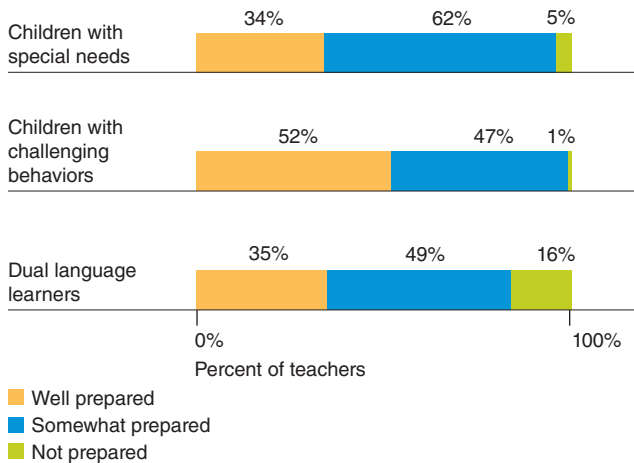
Most teachers (68%) indicate that they are well prepared to implement the program’s curriculum.

Fewer teachers believe they are prepared to work with students with diverse needs:

- About one-third of teachers report being well prepared to work with children with special needs (34%).
- Slightly more than half of teachers (52%) report being well prepared to work with children with challenging behaviors.
- Approximately one-third of teachers (35%) report being well prepared to work with dual language learners.

PFA Lead Teacher Perceptions of Preparation to Work with Various Populations

Source: Teacher surveys (n=150)

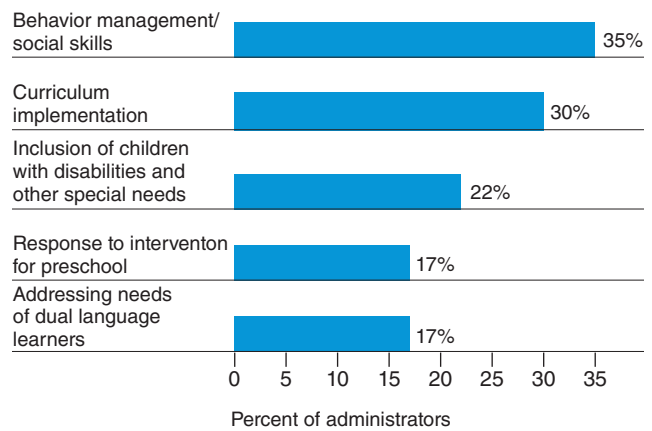


PFA administrators identified behavior management as the area of greatest need for professional development for teachers.

PFA program administrators identified several areas where they believed teachers in their programs needed more professional development. The most common training needs identified by administrators include how to manage child behavior (35%), implement curriculum (30%), and effectively include and serve children with disabilities and other special needs (22%).

Professional Development Needs of Staff in PFA Programs, as Reported by Program Administrators

Source: Administrator interviews (n=99)

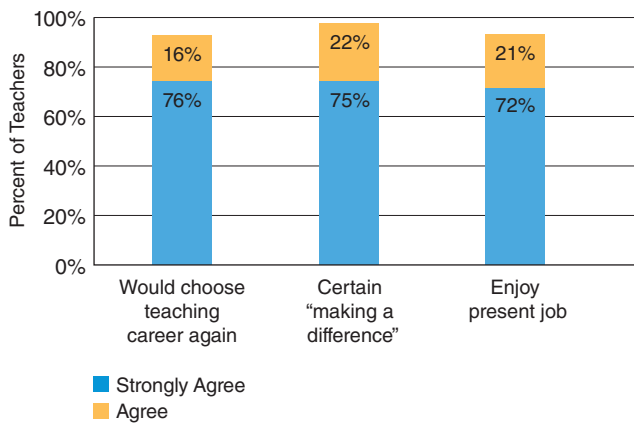


Most PFA teachers report positive perceptions about their jobs and the support they receive from their programs.

PFA teachers were asked about their career choice, their present job, and the support they receive from their PFA program. Overall, teachers report positive perceptions about their jobs and program support. The vast majority of teachers (92%) agree or strongly agree that they would choose teaching again, and 83% agree or strongly agree that their programs provide them with enough professional development.

PFA Teacher Perceptions About Their Career

Source: Teacher surveys (n=150)

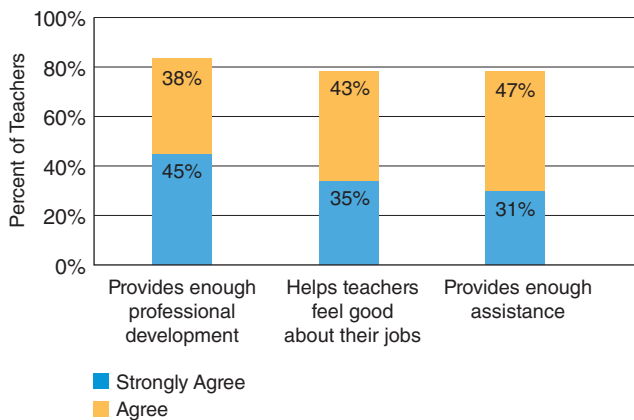


About the data: *The evaluation team collected data from multiple sources, including a web-based survey and interviews with program administrators, interviews with parents, teacher surveys, classroom observations, and direct assessments of children. The evaluation took an in-depth look at 120 programs and nearly 700 children and their families throughout the state (excluding the city of Chicago).*

For more information about the Illinois Preschool for All (PFA) Evaluation, visit www.erikson.edu/PFAEvaluation.

PFA Teacher Perceptions About Program Support

Source: Teacher surveys (n=150)



Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy at Erikson Institute

Lead Evaluator

Erikson Institute advances the ability of practitioners, researchers, and decision makers to improve life for children and their families through its academic programs, applied research, and community partnerships and initiatives.

The Herr Research Center conducts original research, evaluations, and analysis to inform, guide, and support effective early childhood policy.

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SRI International is an independent, non-profit research institute conducting client-sponsored research and development for government agencies, commercial businesses, foundations, and other organizations. The Early Childhood Program is part of SRI's Policy Division.

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Early Childhood Division

Illinois State Board of Education

Funder

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) administers public education in Illinois. The Early Childhood Division focuses on children from birth to 8 years old.

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