

Preschool Healing Classrooms Early Childhood Education Program For Syrian Refugee Children

An Evaluation of Program Progress, Sucessess and Challenges **AUTHORS** Katie Murphy

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Executive Summary

An estimated 4 million Syrian children have been born since the start of the brutal war in 2011.¹ Conflict, violence, displacement, insecurity, and loss have played prominent roles in the lives of these young children during their critical formative years of life. The developing brain is highly dependent on experience to build the neurological foundations for lifelong learning and behavior. Experiences that induce severe and prolonged stress, in the absence of safe, consistent and responsive care from a trusted adult, can have long-lasting effects on the developing brain and the stress response system.² Without intervention, these children face cognitive, physical and social-emotional delays that not only impact how they learn, grow and interact with others, but can also impact the well-being of future generations during their critical formative years of life. At a time when the developing brain is highly dependent on experience to build the neurological foundations for lifelong learning and behavior.³

Investments in early childhood have been found to be one of the most cost-effective strategies for improving the long-term economic, health and social well-being of both individuals and their broader societies.⁴ Among the most effective interventions for children living in adversity are high-quality preschool programs, where children are provided with a safe, secure and predictable environment with nurturing and responsive facilitators to promote play and early learning. For young children affected by the war in Syria, preschool programs offer a vital opportunity to build resiliency and prepare for future academic success.

In response to the influx of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, the IRC has been implementing the Preschool Healing Classrooms Early Childhood Education (PHC-ECE) program since April 2016. The program builds upon decades of field research in crisis and conflict settings and integrates best practices for early childhood education through the use of a play-based and child-centered curriculum adapted for the Syrian context. This report provides an analysis of the program monitoring and evaluation data and includes a qualitative analysis of the perceptions of 66 parents, teachers, facilitators, and staff members on the strengths and challenges of the program.

The results are organized by core components of the Preschool Healing Classrooms theory of change, exploring how both quantitative data from our M&E findings as well the complementary findings from our qualitative study provide insights into three drivers of child outcomes: access and attendance, play-based learning, program quality, and parent engagement. The results then focus on the primary outcome of interest for this program, child development outcomes, through the analysis of assessment scores and the perceptions of participants in the qualitative study. This section also includes a quantitative analysis of the relationship between teaching practices and child development outcomes. Finally, the fifth section includes additional insights and challenges that were identified through the quantitative study.

¹ UNICEF (2018). Press Release: Half of Syria's children have grown up only seeing violence as conflict nears eightyear mark. Retrieved from: https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/half-syrias-children-have-grown-only-seeingviolence-conflict-nears-eight-year-mark

² Shonkoff, J. P., Garner, A. S., Siegel, B. S., Dobbins, M. I., Earls, M. F., McGuinn, L., ... & Wood, D. L. (2012). The lifelong effects of early childhood adversity and toxic stress. Pediatrics, 129(1), e232-e246.

³ Grantham-McGregor, S., Cheung, Y. B., Cueto, S., Glewwe, P., Richter, L., Strupp, B., & International Child Development Steering Group. (2007). Developmental potential in the first 5 years for children in developing countries. The Lancet, 369(9555), 60-70.

⁴ Heckman, J. J., Moon, S. H., Pinto, R., Savelyev, P. A., & Yavitz, A. (2010). The rate of return to the HighScope Perry Preschool Program. Journal of Public Economics, 94(1), 114-128.

The analysis of these findings reveals that overall, the program is succeeding in improving developmental outcomes of young children, and while this study did not include a comparison with a control group of children who did not participate in the program, the qualitative data supports this claim, as parents and staff reported notable changes in children's academic and behavioral skills. Key results for the 2017-2018 cycle include:

Increases in child development scores over the course of the program, measured by IDELA:

- **24%** increase in pre-literacy
- **33%** increase in pre-numeracy
- 28% increase in socio-emotional skills
- **21%** increase in motor skills

High levels of program quality, measured by MELE:

- 24% average increases in quality scores across all centers, comparing scores from the program start and the program end
- 92% average scores for the items related to play-based learning across all centers
- **95%** average scores for the items related to teaching practices that promote a sense of control and positive discipline
- **92%** average scores for the items related to teaching practices that promote a sense of belonging and inclusiveness
- **88%** average scores for the items related to teaching practices that promote a sense of pride

The results suggest that key teaching strategies of PHC-ECE captured in the MELE/ TCO subtasks (play-based learning, sense of control, sense of belonging, and sense of pride) are each useful in improving children's basic academic skills such as literacy and numeracy. Teacher ability to create play-based learning environments has a significant impact on literacy and numeracy outcomes. Specifically:

- > Teachers' creation of **play-based learning environments** helped improve:
 - 3/6 literacy subtasks
 - 5/5 numeracy subtasks

One percentage point increase in teachers' ability to create play-based learning environments contributes to significant increases in children's literacy and numeracy skills.

Additionally, the promotion of sense of control and positive discipline appears to have the most impact on children's socio-emotional outcomes, through the development of skills such as self-awareness, empathy and perspective taking, and conflict resolution.

Key challenges to the main drivers of children's development include high rates of attrition (up to 34%), to which staff point to a lack of appreciation for the value of preschool programs, and lack of parents' appreciation of the value of play as learning. Additional challenges include addressing the specific needs of children with disabilities and children who experience severe adversity, such as violence and abuse.

Specific recommendations that emerge from this analysis include:

- Identifying and implementing effective strategies for parent and community engagement that emphasize the importance of play-based learning to encourage enrollment, attendance and reduce attrition
- Strengthening support for children with disabilities and exploring the possibility of hiring a specialist to support teachers and staff with integration and adaptation strategies
- Adjusting the curriculum for 3-year-olds to ensure that there is adequate attention and time dedicated to the home-to-center transition
- Strengthening trainings for new teachers and facilitators, with an emphasis on positive discipline and communication techniques to support young children's learning and adjustment
- ▶ Re-assessing the shift cycle, to explore the possibility of 5-day-a-week programs, based on parent and staff demand
- Ensuring timely delivery of program materials and providing teachers and facilitators with appropriate visual resources and pictures to assist them in delivering activities and minimize the time required for preparations
- Reviewing the alignment between the PHC-ECE curriculum and the Ministry curriculum and ensuring that the Ministry's requirements are met, while maintaining the important elements of the PHC curriculum in a manner that is easy for teachers

Future research will be important to further explore the effects of the preschool program, and the specific facilitators and barriers to achieving child development outcomes.

Introduction

After the onset of the crisis in Syria in 2011, Lebanon witnessed a massive flow of Syrian refugees. With an estimated 1.5 million Syrians residing in Lebanon (nearly 1 million of whom are officially registered with UNHCR), Lebanon has the world's largest concentration of refugees per capita and the fourth largest refugee population in the world.⁵ While the majority of Syrian refugee preschool-aged children (ages 3 to 6 years old) were born in Lebanon, many of their parents and family members witnessed horrific violence and loss and, now living as refugees, continue to experience high levels of insecurity and stress, which threaten their ability to provide nurturing care for their young children.

While the Government of Lebanon has identified Early Childhood Education as a priority area for intervention, the efforts of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) and their education partners are not matched by the necessary resources and capacity to address this urgent need, and by December 2018, enrollment in preschool for 3- to 5-year-old Syrian children had only reached 20%.⁶ Since 2017, MEHE conducted efforts to strengthen community-based ECE (CB-ECE) programs for Syrian refugees and granted formal authorization to eleven NGOs to implement the community-based ECE model, including IRC.

⁵ UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP (2018). Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees Living in Lebanon. UNHCR, Beirut. ⁶ Ibid

Preschool Healing Classrooms Program and Theory of Change

Through the Preschool Healing Classrooms program, the IRC provides young children with safe, consistent and nurturing learning experiences designed to improve children's cognitive and socioemotional skills to prepare them for academic success and well-being. Learning through play is a core foundation of the Preschool Healing Classrooms approach, and teachers and facilitators receive training and professional development support to assist them in delivering play-based, developmentally-appropriate learning activities through a mixture of whole-group activities, teacher-led songs and games, child-led play within the learning centers, and free play. In addition to play-based learning, teachers and facilitators receive training and support on the tenets of the PHC-ECE curriculum, which are grounded in an understanding of what young children living in conflict and crisis need in order to flourish. These include teaching strategies and classroom modifications to promote inclusion to ensure all children feel a sense of belonging, a sense of pride in their accomplishments and abilities to learn and solve problems, a sense of control by creating predictable routines, class norms and rules with fair and consistent consequences, and by allowing children to choose activities that interest them. Teachers and facilitators strive to promote positive social relationships among the children as well as between the children and the adults.

The basic theory of change asserts that:

if young children have access to and attend at least 200 hours of safe, high-quality, center-based early-learning programs;

if educators deliver engaging, play-based early-learning activities and promote a sense of belonging, a sense of pride, a sense of control (predictability), and positive social relationships;

if parents and caregivers engage in play and learning activities in the home;

THEN young children will have improved cognitive and socio-emotional skills.

The PHC-ECE program is designed for children ages 3-5 (KG1= age 3, KG2= age 4, KG3= age 5). Most 6-year-old children transition to government primary schools, though attendance records indicate that some 6-year-olds are also attending some of the KG3 classes, which is detailed later in this report. Centers are established in rented spaces when in urban settings and in tents when in the Informal Tented Settlements (ITSs) and equipped with basic teaching and learning supplies, including small tables and chairs for the various learning centers and pillows for the "Peace Corner." A basic depiction of the set-up is provided in Annex A. A teaching team is selected for each PHC-ECE, which includes a Lebanese teacher and a Syrian facilitator. The teachers and facilitators receive four days of initial training in the PHC approach, in-service trainings, monthly supervision visits, and participate in monthly "teacher learning circles" with their peers. To provide additional guidance to teachers, many of whom do not have substantial training, the IRC provides daily lesson plans, which are aligned with the national curriculum for CB-ECE, but aim to ensure the integration of age-appropriate play-based learning activities, including whole-group activities, read-alouds, free play, and designated time for learning center activities. The original design of the program model included 3.5 hour sessions, five days a week, for 33 weeks. In an effort to increase access to CB-ECE for Syrian refugee children, MEHE changed the policy in 2017 to promote shorter-duration four-month programs, which would allow for more children to cycle through CB-ECE programs. The IRC conducted testing of three different program durations and dosages, and determined that longer-duration programs, even when total dosage was reduced to approximately 280 hours, held greater promise for improving children's outcomes, particularly as young children are often without a safe place to play, socialize and learn when ECE classes are not in session. Therefore, the IRC's PHC-ECE model in Lebanon for the 2017-2018 school year was modified so that all enrolled children were offered sessions three days a week for 3 hours a day for 33 weeks.

Evaluation Design

The mixed method program evaluation design draws upon monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data collected by the IRC-Lebanon team. The IRC-Lebanon team has a robust M&E framework, which is used to collect data on children's enrollment and attendance, the quality of pedagogical practices, classroom environments, and child development outcomes. Enrollment data is collected from all children at the beginning of each cycle (n= 2,454 for 2017-2018) and attendance data is collected daily by teachers and verified through unannounced spot-checks conducted by staff and trained parent volunteers. Program quality is assessed through a teacher-classroom observation tool at baseline and endline for each class (n= 61 teachers across 34 learning centers), and child development is measured at baseline and endline for a random sample of children from each class (n= 530 children with longitudinal data). The analysis of this data provides valuable insights into the quality of preschool programs and the relationships between teacher performance, classroom environment, children's attendance, and developmental outcomes.

Table 1: Numbers of learning centers, teachers and children by region and time

Reg	gion	Baseline	Endline	Sub-total	
Akkar	Learning centers	14	14	14	
	Teacher	30	30	30	
	Student	260	260	260	
Bekaa	Learning centers	20	20	20	
	Teacher	31	31	31	
	Student	270	270	270	
Total		Learning centers = 34, teachers = 61, students = 530			

To complement the quantitative data gathered through M&E systems, a qualitative study was used to gather perceptions of program quality and effectiveness from key stakeholder groups in the two regions where the PHC-ECE program is implemented, Akkar and Bekaa. This information provides the opportunity to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the current program and to design quality improvement strategies. Key stakeholders included:

- 1. Parents: Defined as any biological or adopted parent (male or female) of a preschool-aged child (3-6) enrolled in an IRC PHC-ECE program, or an adult relative of a preschool child that serves as the primary caregiver (aunt/uncle, grandmother/grandfather, etc.).
- 2. Teachers: Lebanese teachers who have received training from IRC in the PHC approach and are currently teaching within IRC-supported PHC-ECE centers.
- 3. Facilitators: Syrian facilitators of PHC-ECE classrooms (according to Lebanese labor laws, Syrians are not permitted to officially serve as "teachers," so they are paired with Lebanese teachers for each PHC-ECE classroom).
- 4. Supervisors: IRC PHC-ECE Officers who regularly conduct supervisory visits to PHC-ECE classrooms and support the professional development of teachers and facilitators.

The qualitative study was designed by the IRC team; data collection was conducted by a Lebanese research consultant, who has substantial experience conducting interviews and focus groups in Arabic for IRC's Education Team. The team identified a purposeful sampling strategy to include a range of key demographic features, such as location (urban, peri-urban, rural) and school and teacher performance level. Teachers and facilitators were prioritized for selection if they had worked in the IRC's PHC-ECE program since 2016 or had at least one year of experience working with IRC's PHC-ECE program. In the cases where the fulfillment of this criteria was

not possible, previous experience of one or two years was held sufficient for teachers and facilitators to be eligible to participate in the assessment. Parents were only selected if they had a child currently enrolled in PHC-ECE with an attendance rate of 50% or higher and with general knowledge of the PHC-ECE. General knowledge was assessed through three simple questions administered through a telephone screener: What program does your child go to three days a week? What activities do they do? What is the location of the class? Parents who responded correctly to two or more questions were eligible to participate. All of IRC's PHC-ECE supervisors (i.e. PHC-ECE Officers) participated in the evaluation.

	Akkar			Bekaa			Study Total
	Female Male Sub-total		Female	Male	Sub-total		
Teachers	4	0	4	4	0	4	8
Facilitators	4	0	4	4	0	4	8
Parents	15	9	24	24	0	24	48
Supervisors	4	0	4	2	2	4	8

Table 2: Number of IRC's PHC-ECE supervisors who participated in the evaluation

Measures

Monitoring and evaluation data is collected through standardized measures and includes the use of the global Monitoring Early Learning Environments (MELE) tool,⁷ which was adapted by the IRC for the PHC-ECE program. Additionally, in partnership with Save the Children, the IRC-Lebanon team conducted an adaptation workshop in 2016 for the International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA) and uses IDELA for the assessment of child development outcomes.

The qualitative data collection used both focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs). The FGD format allows for the exploration of a set of topics through stimulated conversations with peers to promote the continuous emergence of ideas. The FGD topics for supervisors focused on the performance of teachers and facilitators, the communities' relationship to the PHC-ECE program and the perceived impact of the latter on students. The FGD discussion guide for parents focused on the participants' opinions of preschool and education in general, as well as their children's experience with IRC's PHC-ECE program and their suggestions for the improvement of the program. KIIs were used with teachers and facilitators to gather more in-depth information and detailed experiences with the PHC-ECE. Teachers and facilitators were asked to recount the personal challenges they faced while working in the program, observations of student behaviors or changes in behavior, in addition to giving their own evaluation of the PHC-ECE approach. All FGDs and KIIs included questions about the integration of children with special needs in the PHC-ECE program, as this constituted one of IRC's objectives in the last years.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Monitoring and evaluation data is collected by trained IRC staff, who conduct regular supervisory visits to the PHC-ECE classes. To analyze the changes in child development scores, we used the IDELA data collected from 530 children who were surveyed at both baseline and endline of the 2017-2018 cycle, and estimated the average baseline and endline scores in different learning areas measured in the IDELA, including literacy, numeracy, social-emotional learning (SEL), motor skills, and approaches to learning. Internal consistency statistics showed reasonable to good reliability of each of the four MELE-TCO subtasks. To analyze the changes in teacher performance and learning environment scores, we used teacher performance data collected from a sample of 61 teachers using the MELE preschool teacher classroom observation (TCO) tool, measuring the extent to which each teacher creates play-based learning environments and promotes a

sense of control, pride and belonging (inclusiveness). We also analyzed how changes in children's performance relate to their teachers' performance by applying a first-difference regression approach and accounting for the children's performance changes caused by factors related to teacher performance.

For the qualitative data collection, an experienced Lebanese researcher and consultant conducted FGDs and KIIs in PHC-ECE centers, outside center shift hours to ensure the privacy of participants. Figure 1 below lists the different locations in which the FGDs and KIIs were conducted, along with the corresponding region, type of area and type of PHC-ECE center.



The FGDs and KIIs were administered in Arabic by a local consultant and recorded after obtaining the participants' informed verbal consent. The recordings were then transcribed and translated into English to enable the data analysis process to start.

Transcriptions of the FGDs and KIIs were coded along the major themes around which the discussions were structured and other key themes that emerged during the interviews. The analysis focused on the program's different actors, their perceptions of the program and the main challenges they face or pose, and on the PHC-ECE approach through its positive impact on beneficiaries and the perceived challenges.

Limitations

While this analysis was designed to shed light on important trends and perceptions of the PHC-ECE program in Lebanon, the study was not designed to demonstrate causal impact of the effects of preschool versus no preschool on children's outcomes, as no control group was used in this study. Additionally, this study was not designed to collect generalizable data of children's performance, teacher performance, program quality, or parent perceptions outside the scope of the PHC-ECE program. For the qualitative components of this study, while significant efforts were made to develop a rigorous sampling strategy, selection bias may have occurred in that the eligible parents that opted out of participation may have had distinct views compared to those who agreed to participate. Additionally, this study does not include the voices and perceptions of children, who are the primary beneficiaries of this program. The study team agreed to exclude data collection with children from this study due to limitations of resources, as well as the children's developmental stage, expressive abilities and refugee status. Nonetheless, the inclusion of children's perceptions of the program would be beneficial for future research studies.

⁷ UNESCO, UNICEF, Brookings Institution and the World Bank, (2017). Overview: Measuring Early Learning Quality and Outcomes. UNESCO, Paris.

Figure 3: Parent-reported reasons for dropping out of PHC-ECD

(n= 842 children)



Parent Perceptions of PHC-ECE Program

An important influence on child enrollment and attendance is the parents' perceptions of the value of the PHC-ECE program. Parents are the key decision-makers in the young child's life and are responsible for preparing and encouraging the child to attend classes. Analysis of FGDs with parents reveals a strong recognition of the importance of early education across the different locations. Nonetheless, parents point to the preparation for primary school as the primary and often sole reason that they enroll their child in PHC-ECE. Parents also recognize that the new context of the Lebanese school system presents new challenges that they are not prepared to address, as the parents do not have foreign language skills (English and French) that their child will need in order to succeed in the Lebanon public school. As one participant stated, "[...]PHC-ECE prepares [the child] a lot [for public school]...Let's say the mother of the child studied at university for four years, but she does not know how to speak French...the program here is in French so we are worried about [the kids]." Since the PHC-ECE sessions include both Arabic and foreign language content (English or French), the children receive both mother-tongue instruction as well as early exposure to the foreign languages that they will need in primary and secondary schools.

Very few parents spoke of PHC-ECE as a long-term investment that will improve their children's future. Only one person mentioned the relationship between education and work, saying, "If the child works [in the future], they might need to write something." Parents also emphasized the importance of the socialization the occurs in PHC-ECE, again relating this to the preparation for primary school. One of the parents stated: "I was very happy because my son was going to prepare for public school, because if I directly send him to elementary school, he will not adapt immediately. This way, with the PHC-ECE center, he becomes more audacious and more sociable." PHC-ECE was thus looked at as having an important influence on the child's early character building.

While academic learning emerged as a major driver to encourage parents to enroll their children in the PHC-ECE program, it is not the only one. Several extra-curricular aspects were valued by parents in their choice or experience of IRC's PHC-ECE program. Among these aspects, the food, safety, treatment of children, and the program's credibility were cited by various interviewees. Food was mentioned by supervisors and a teacher as a feature of the program much appreciated by children and parents alike. Parents also talked about safety, pointing to the good organization of the program and control of the classes. As an example, parents felt reassured that the children were not allowed to leave the class by themselves. The staff waits for the parents to pick up the students. Both parents and supervisors also mentioned the positive treatment of kids, underlining the teachers' and facilitators' patience and kindness. According to supervisors, the program has achieved credibility over the years through the quality it constantly offered, which increased parents' trust in the organization and its work. Participants cited the emphasis on academic quality and an attention to extra-curricular as key factors in enabling the IRC to build and expand its PHC-ECE program.

Results

The results are organized by core components of the Preschool Healing Classrooms theory of change, exploring how both quantitative data from our M&E findings as well the complementary findings from our qualitative study provide insights into each component. The first section focuses on results related to access and attendance, using records of enrollment, attendance, drop-out rates and recorded reasons for leaving preschool coupled with responses from parents that shed light on their motivations to enroll, encourage attendance and in some cases de-enroll their children. This section also includes an analysis of access for children with disabilities, using both the M&E data and responses from participants in the qualitative study. The second section takes a closer look at how the PHC-ECE program is achieving its intended goal of establishing play-based learning environments and quality learning experiences that are aligned with the Preschool Healing Classrooms approach, through both the quantitative and qualitative data. The third section explores *parent* engagement, looking at data on parent participation in PHC-ECE related activities and events, and parent's reported use of play and learning activities in the home. This is combined with the perceptions of parent engagement that were revealed in the qualitative study. The forth section focuses on the primary outcome of interest for this program, child development outcomes, through the analysis of assessment scores and the perceptions of participants in the qualitative study. This section also includes a quantitative analysis of the relationship between teaching practices and child development outcomes. Finally, the fifth section includes additional insights and challenges that were identified through the quantitative study.

Access and Attendance

M&E Data

With the goal of enrolling 2,000 children in the 2017-2018 school year, the IRC exceeded its expectations, with a total enrollment of 2,454 students, defined as attending at least one day of PHC-ECE classes. This is an increase from 1,000 children in 2016-2017, and the 300 children that participated in the initial PHC-ECE pilot in 2016.

Despite the increases in enrollment over the past three years, the program experiences high levels of attrition, with a total of 842 children dropping out over the course of the 2017-2018 PHC-ECE cycle, IRC staff, ECE Officers and teachers all followed up with dropouts on a monthly basis through phone calls and home visits to encourage attendance. Reasons for dropping out were captured and stored in the IRC database to better understand the phenomenon and ensure the implementation of future solutions to mitigate students' challenges.

Reported reasons for dropping out are captured in figure 3. It is important to note that 14% of the dropouts (117 children) returned to PHC-ECE after staff follow-ups.

As observed in Table 4, males have a higher rate of dropout compared to females, with 4-year-olds constituting the largest number of dropouts. Similarly, among children who attend more than 50% of sessions, attendance rates are relatively high, an average of 87% across genders and age categories. Figure 2 illustrates the attendance rate by age and gender, and indicates slightly higher attendance rates for girls in age 4 and age 5.

Table 3: Enrolled students

		Gen	der		%
	Age	Female	Male	Female	Male
	2	57	51	2%	2%
	3	440	412	18%	17%
	4	515	500	21%	20%
	5	228	245	9%	10%
	6	3	3	0%	0%
Sub-total		1243	1211	51%	49%
Gr	and Total	2,4	54	10	00%

Table 4: Drop-out rates

	Age	Female	Male
	3	73	73
	4	146	160
	5	137	162
	6	39	52
	Sub-total	395	447
Grand Total		84	12

Figure 2: Attendance rate by age and gender



One challenge to increasing enrollment and attendance, as reported by some of the teachers, is the competition among organizations and parents seeking material benefits offered by those organizations. One teacher told of the shift in attendance years ago - when a significant number of parents withdrew their children - because an organization distributing items like fuel and clothes opened nearby. The move was countered through the positive results achieved by children in IRC's PHC-ECE program, which convinced the parents to continue with the organization and new parents to register their children.

Integration of Children with Disabilities

The PHC-ECE classroom is intended to welcome all young children in the catchment area for each center, regardless of abilities or special needs. Parents and staff members report that over the past two years parents of children with autism, hearing impairment and physical paralysis do not refrain from registering their children in PHC-ECE classes. On the contrary, parents report that they are eager to give their children the possibility to socialize with peers. Nonetheless, some teachers and facilitators in Akkar report a lack of clarity on the organization's policy for the integration of children with special needs, highlighting the need for clearer guidance. They also cite specific measures that would improve the integration of children with disabilities, including equipment and materials and more accommodating transportation systems for locations where children use transportation to attend classes. Overall, discussions with supervisors in both Akkar and in the Bekaa underscore a lack of expertise in special cases within their teams. None of the current supervisors have a background in special needs education, and all are aware of the limits

in their own knowledge and experience when confronted with such cases. The supervisors agree that a special needs expert should be part of the team to work with the PHC-ECE team and the teachers on the incorporation of children with special cases in the classroom. Some supervisors also suggest the need to refer some children to specialized centers before integrating them into standard classes, arguing that the children need a tailored curriculum and competent teachers as a first step.

In contrast with the supervisors, most teachers and facilitators feel confident working with children with special needs. During the KIIs, we asked teachers and facilitators if they think they possess the trainings and skills they need to adapt the classroom activities to 1) a child with developmental delays and 2) a child with a hearing impairment. Most teachers and facilitators responded positively, suggesting that they could support a student with developmental delays by repeating explanations or instructions, using a trial and error approach to identify strategies that are most effective for the child, or by establishing a simple emotional connection with the child. One teacher cited teaching a hearing-impaired student through the use of "signs" (meant as gestures and body language, not a formal sign language).

The M&E data from enrollment records provide additional details into the total number of enrolled children with special educational needs (SEN).

Table 5 represents the number of students who attended at least one day in the ECE cycle disaggregated by gender and case. The four most common special need categories were Allergy, Asthma, Hyperactivity, and Aggression. All of these cases were identified while registering the students at the start of the school year. Forty-nine out of 101 cases were referred to receive additional support services based on the child and family's interest and willingness to receive referrals. Paper documentation of the referral was created by the ECE Officers and shared with the Senior Officers, who then shared the information with relevant organizations. Unfortunately, there is no system in place to track referrals after they are shared with external organizations, so we do not have updated information on the status of these children.

Table 5: Special needs classifications

	Female	Male	Total	%
Disability / SEN	1			
Allergy	6	10	16	16%
Asthma	5	11	16	16%
Blood Issue		1	1	1%
Visual Problem	3	3	6	6%
Growth Problem	1	2	3	3%
Heart Problem		2	2	2%
Hearing	1		1	1%
Kidney Problem		1	1	1%
Low Immunity		1	1	1%
Pronunciation	3	6	9	9%
Rheumatism	1		1	1%
Speech		1	1	1%
Urinary		1	1	1%
Walking Problem		1	1	1%
Psychosocial sup	port needs	;		
Aggression	6	8	14	14%
Hyperactive	5	7	12	12%
Mental Problem	1	2	3	3%
Seclusion	2	2	4	4%
Anxiety		2	2	2%
Anemia	2		2	2%
Autism		1	1	1%
Epilepsy		3	3	3%
Grand Total	36	65	101	100%

Play-Based Learning Approach and Program Quality

M&E Data

As described above, monitoring of the quality of the PHC-ECE program is conducted through the use of the MELE tool, which was assessed at the start (baseline) and end (endline) of the program. For the purpose of this evaluation, IRC's Senior Research Coordinator conducted an analysis of the MELE items and identified the items that showed reasonable to good reliability statistics. The resulting analysis focuses on four key domains of the PHC approach (play-based learning, sense of belonging/inclusiveness, sense of pride, and sense of control/ positive discipline). As observed in the figure below, the average scores across all centers was relatively high, indicating high levels of quality at both baseline and endline, with average scores approaching or over 90% for each domain. Most notably, the average score for play-based learning increased by 24.3% over the course of the program. Across all learning centers, the average MELE scores showed an 11.3%-point to 14.3%-point increase, indicating overall positive growth patterns. At the same time, five centers indicated negative growth in one of the PHC domains, warranting further follow-up and monitoring for those centers.



Figure 4: Quality scores in PHC-ECE in 2017-2016 cycle (n= 61 teachers)

Perceptions of Play-Based Learning and Program Quality

Parents in four out of the eight locations where FGDs were held did not acknowledge the value of play for early learning, and several parents expressed that play may actually hinder or compete with learning. A few parents stated concerns that the program is "not teaching anything" to their children. One parent stated: "It is important for [the children] to attend the kindergarten but they should also receive education. They should not only waste their time by playing...They should teach them correctly." Another comment stated: "My daughter came now and I asked her what did they teach her, she said 'nothing.' They give her for example a paper to draw on, but I just want that in addition they teach her the letters and how to write them." A third participant said: "The teachers are so kind and competent but I wish if they would limit the plaving time a bit since I am not convinced that it is beneficial."

Teachers, facilitators and supervisors all cite parents' lack of understanding of the PHC-ECE approach, particularly the emphasis on play-based learning, as a top challenge they face within the communities. Supervisors in Bekaa explain: "Parents want us to focus on teaching the letters, numbers and pure learning skills, while we are focusing on different aspects like cognitive, socio-emotional and social skills. When it comes to the parents, they think that learning is a pure cognitive process, limited to reading and writing. We also organize activities to develop the social interactions of the kids, so parents are not convinced that these activities and the play-based approach are teaching approaches. It took us time to convince the parents that we are teaching through playing, they did not accept it at the beginning." According to the supervisors in both regions, parents' negative perceptions of play changed when parents saw their children's results at the end of the year. Others reported that parents changed their perceptions when they learned that other organizations also have an emphasis on play-based

learning. However, the statements of the parents above indicate that there are still significant numbers of parents who do not understand the value of play for early learning.

During interviews with teachers and facilitators, they identified techniques and teaching strategies that they found most effective for improving the quality of the learning environment and improving children's developmental outcomes. The most cited technique was simple encouragement, which aligns with the PHC conception of sense of pride. Teachers discussed using encouragement for various situations: prompting reserved children to participate, incentivizing children with speech difficulties to speak, or correcting negative behavior like aggressiveness after explaining the misconduct. The second most commonly cited technique was communicating at the child's level, which aligns with the PHC conception of positive social relationships. One teacher provided an example of how she used this

"The teachers are so kind and competent but I wish if they would limit the playing time a bit since I am not convinced that it is beneficial."

communication technique with a violent child: "I would go down to his level to talk to him. I used to tell him nicely that the hands we have are to love each other, to hug, to play with our peers and hold their hands. It slowly started to work." Other methods include attention and care and task assigning, again to promote sense of pride. These techniques are used to boost self-confidence in insecure children and to correct a negative behaviors. For example, assigning a stubborn child as a class helper gave them a role in the community that is perceived as important. This renders the child happy and helps in forgoing the stubbornness. On the other hand, assigning tasks like erasing the board or distributing papers to a reserved child lets them break the ice between the student and the community while feeling like an important member of the class. This results in an improvement in participation and engagement. Rarely were more negative techniques, such as ignoring, employed. This method was only mentioned twice during the interviews, and it was adopted by teachers to address attention-seeking behaviors.

Parent Engagement

M&E Data

During May and June 2018, two parenting sessions were conducted with the parents of the ECE students and 765 parents attended at least one of these sessions, which included topics such as:

The impact of parenting, holistic development and early brain building

Playing is learning

Celebrating and toy-making workshop

The sessions also included activities such as doll-making, story-telling and group games and activities. In order to understand parent engagement in early play and learning activities at home, 390 parents participated in a survey after attending a parenting session. According to self-reporting, 86% of parents engaged in at least one play and learning activity with their child in the past three days. 63% engaged in at least three activities in the past three days, and 14% had not participated in any activity. Reported activities included reading, singing, story-telling, outside activities, playing, and naming/counting. Additionally, over 900 parents participated in community engagement activities, which focused on topics such as the importance of education, attendance, hygiene, the role of parents, retention, and tent safety.

Staff Perceptions of Parent Engagement

As enrollment in the PHC-ECE program requires a significant investment from the parents, attendance of their children is encouraged. In interviews across the locations, teachers, facilitators and supervisors expressed frustrations with parents' lack of interest in education and lack of commitment to the program. The perceptions of teachers, facilitators and supervisors are at odds with the interest and appreciation for early education that parents often expressed during FGDs, as described previously in this report. Yet during the FGDs and KIIs with teachers,

facilitators and supervisors, a lack of parent interest in education was cited in six locations out of the eight. These participants suggested that this was due to the parents' rural background or lack of material benefits from the program. This issue has been referenced since the mobilization campaigns (preceding the launch of the program, designed to inform parents about its objectives). One teacher explained: "In the first location where I worked, there was neglect from the parents' part. When we went to register the kids, the parents would send us away and curse us. Even if we tried to tell them to let their children learn, the parents decided that they did not want to." In response, the IRC staff engaged in significant communication efforts to try to change the parents' minds. One strategy involved inviting parents to the class to witness their children's activities and progress. Indeed, through the years, the organization succeeded in increasing the rate of parents' participation and interest, sometimes by 90%, according to a teacher who spoke of the change she observed in her location.

In both Akkar and Bekaa, teachers and facilitators reported having to wait for children to arrive, and at times, traveling to the child's home to wake up the child as the parents would still be asleep. According to the staff, parents' lack of engagement has consequences on the center's shift, which ends up being pushed due to the delays in children's preparation for the class. As expressed by the teachers, facilitators and staff, they have a strong commitment to children and make every effort to prevent absences, even in cases where the parents are not able or willing to assist the child in getting ready for class.

Child Development Outcomes

M&E Data

The analysis of matched longitudinal data for 530 children was used to calculate changes in children's school-readiness scores, as measured by IDELA. In general, children showed an increase in their learning outcomes across different areas from baseline to endline, with a minimum 10.2%-point increase in Letter Identification and a maximum of 30.2%-point increase in Number Identification. A complete analysis of IDELA results, including the sub-domain results are included in Annex B.

Figure 5: Children's mean IDELA scores at baseline and endline



Perceptions of Child Development Outcomes

According to participants in the qualitative study, improvement in literacy and numeracy is not the only change induced by the PHC-ECE program, as they noted that the program also affects the social, emotional and psychological development of children. The majority of the success stories told by teachers and facilitators involved changes in children's behavior, personality, discipline, and even speech. An interesting finding from the interviews and FGDs concerns the number of children who suffered from speech problems at the start of the PHC-ECE program. In all locations but one where the evaluation was carried out, at least one example of speech difficulties was cited by teachers, facilitators or parents. The speech problems manifested themselves either in

stuttering or in the total absence of verbal communication. According to the different testimonies offered by teachers and facilitators, children were either not offered enough attention by parents, suffered from violence, or lacked a social context that encouraged them to speak. By encouraging children to speak, the PHC-ECE program succeeded mostly at building their selfconfidence and offering them a space to express themselves, feel listened to and encouraged. Other major reported changes include noted reductions in aggressiveness, stubbornness, attention-seeking, and shyness. Teachers and facilitators cited one of the greatest achievements of the PHC-ECE as the ability to bring children together in a collective community, where friendship, respect of peers and a group spirit prevail.

For parents, noted key changes in their child's behaviors were differences in routine and discipline. According to some of the parents, before attending the PHC-ECE center, children lived in a disorganized environment. Whether due to their displacement or social background, the lack of a home routine and discipline indicates the absence of an atmosphere favorable for the child's development. The PHC-ECE curriculum concentrates on discipline and routine by teaching children organization, consistency and ethics. The result is not only observed in class, but also at home where children replicate practices and behaviors emphasized in the center. Parents report improvements in sleeping and waking routines, improved behaviors in the home and a heightened consciousness of the results of one's own actions. These changes also extend to hygiene. Children become aware of basic principles such as washing their hands, brushing their hair and teeth, and paying attention to general cleanliness.

Relationship Between Program Quality and Child Outcomes

Annex C shows the effects of teacher performance measured by the MELE on the changes in the children's IDELA scores from baseline to endline, after controlling for unobserved, time-invariant child variables such as gender and home language.

- > Teachers' creation of play-based learning environments significantly improved:
 - 3/6 literacy subtasks. One percentage point increase contributes to:
 - .18% increase in letter identification
 - 44% increase in letter sounds
 - .51% increase in emergent writing
 - 5/5 numeracy subtasks. One percentage point increase contributes to:
 - .23% increase in size comparison
 - **53%** increase in shape identification
 - .19% increase in number identification
 - 32% increase in 1-to-1 correspondence
 - .30% increase in addition and subtraction
 - 1/4 motor skill subtasks (35% increase in copying shapes)
 - 1/2 learning approach subtasks (19% increase in observed persistence)
- Teachers' promotion of sense of control and positive discipline significantly improved:
 - 3/6 literacy subtasks (significant for letter identification, letter sounds and emergent writing) •
 - 3/5 numeracy subtasks (significant for size comparison, shape identification and addition and subtraction) .
 - 3/5 Socio-emotional Learning (SEL) subtasks
 - **.35%** increase in self-awareness
 - 45% increase in empathy/perspective taking
 - 59% increase in solving conflicts
 - .31% in overall SEL
 - 2/4 motor skill subtasks (significant only for copying shapes and hopping)

Teachers' promotion of the sense of belonging and inclusiveness among children significantly improved:

- 3/6 literacy subtasks (significant for letter sounds, emergent writing and oral comprehension)
- 3/5 numeracy subtasks (significant for size comparison, shape identification and addition and subtraction)
- 2/5 SEL subtasks: .
 - .38% increase in empathy/perspective taking
 - 43% increase in solving conflicts
 - 14% increase in overall SEL
- 1/4 motor skill subtasks

- Teachers' promotion of the sense of pride among children significantly improved:
 - 4/6 literacy subtasks
 - .30% increase in print awareness
 - .35% increase in letter identification
 - 42% increase in letter sounds
 - .31% increase in oral comprehension
 - .16% in overall literacy
 - 4/5 numeracy subtasks (significant only for size comparison, shape identification, 1-1 correspondence, and addition and subtraction)
 - 1/5 SEL subtasks (significant only for emotional awareness)
 - 2/4 motor skill subtasks

Taken together, the results suggest that key teaching strategies of PHC-ECE captured in the MELE/TCO subtasks (play-based learning, sense of control, sense of belonging, and sense of pride) are each useful in improving children's basic academic skills such as literacy and numeracy. Teachers' ability to create play-based learning environments has a significant impact on literacy and numeracy outcomes. The promotion of sense of control and positive discipline appears to have the most impact on children's socio-emotional outcomes, through the development of skills such as self-awareness, empathy, perspective taking, and conflict resolution.

Additional Insights and Challenges

This section highlights important findings from the qualitative study that emerged through the analysis of qualitative data, which may be used to inform program modifications or additional interventions. These include insights related to violence, the home-to-center transition, the physical space, delays in materials, and the curriculum.

<u>Violence</u>

Teachers, facilitators and supervisors cited violence, abuse, discrimination, parents' divorce, or death in the family as reasons why children exhibited behavioral challenges in the classroom. These cases constituted a challenge for the staff, as they require significant time and effort to calm and soothe children into the PHC-ECE environment. Teachers and facilitators may not have the skills and capacity to address more extreme cases. In addition, several teachers and facilitators cited exposure to violence in the home as a contributing factor to children's expressions of violence with their peers. Supervisors in Bekaa explained: "For [the children] it is okay to beat someone because they consider that [their] father beats [them] out of love. We ask [a child]: 'Is it okay for you to do that?' he says, 'Yes, my father beats me'." The PHC-ECE staff also highlighted the powerful potential of the preschool center, as it serves as a place to deconstruct these behaviors and social norms by teaching children to refrain from violence and explaining its negative consequences. The staff noted that, in general, they have been successful in helping children adapt to the preschool environment, even when they are experiencing violence and adversity in the home.

At the same time, some supervisors reported the need for additional support for new teachers and facilitators, who may also be accustomed to using negative discipline and even violence in response to children's behaviors. They acknowledged that, in many of these communities, violence can often be a "normal" way of treating a child. The switch to positive discipline and proper communication with the children requires the assistance and supervision of the staff. In the opinion of supervisors in Akkar, a training is needed for teachers to enhance their communication skills with the students to better know how to use positive discipline. To illustrate the current situation and corresponding challenges, a supervisor gave the example of teachers talking about a student's condition in front of the child. The supervisor's intervention was necessary to change the teacher's attitude and encourage them to use patience, positive discipline and respect. In general, these challenges are mainly observed with new teachers, who seem to rely on the supervisors' support without trying to take initiative and find solutions to the problems they face. More experienced teachers adapt more easily and quickly at the start of a new academic year.

Transition from Home-to-Center

The largest child-specific difficulty encountered is the initial transition from the home to a classroom. As described by the teachers and facilitators, this is not an easy change for a 3-year-

old child who is being separated from their mother for the first time. By their own accounts, teachers and facilitators struggle with this issue for a period varying between a week and a month at the beginning of the academic year. Teachers and facilitators have to dedicate significant amounts of time to make these children feel welcome and accustomed to the classroom environment. For this reason, they mentioned the need to alter the lesson plans and activities to account for this adjustment time.

Physical Space

While the establishment of a safe, secure, nurturing environment serves as the cornerstone of any PHC-ECE program, teachers and facilitators noted specific challenges such as the absence of heating, humidity in the classes and insufficient space. The heating issue is particularly problematic because it can affect attendance, as was the case in the Akkar region where all locations suffered from substantial delays in the installation of heaters. A facilitator in Akkar explains: "At the beginning we suffered a lot from the cold. We adults could not bear it. My daughter is registered here in the center, but previously I didn't bring her because it was cold. I got sick, so how are the children supposed to bear the cold?" The facilitators and teachers reported that this is an issue that has reoccurred throughout the years and highlighted the need for more preparation and logistical support before the start of the program. Humidity in the classes is a second challenge cited by some interviewees. According to teachers and facilitators in six of the eight locations, the humidity levels are not so high that they pose a threat to children's health, but it has a damaging effect on the class decorations, which teachers and facilitators dedicate a substantial amount of time to preparing.

Program Material Delays and Preparations

Teachers, facilitators and supervisors emphasized the challenge related to delays in receiving program materials at the centers. Over the years, most delays have decreased, but not totally eliminated. At the start of the 2018 cycle, a number of locations still had to begin the program with material shortages. As told by the supervisors: "This delay makes [the teachers] prepare the activities more, it is an extra work for them already. Sometimes, they have to prepare for some materials the whole day long and the working mood becomes more stressful." The time required for the preparation of class materials was also stressed during the interviews and teachers requested that pictures required for the activities be included in the material kit instead of having to draw them or find pictures online and print them at their own expense.

Curriculum and Program Duration

Another challenge relates to the curriculum. The curriculum is designed by the Ministry of Education and has to be respected. It is also aligned with the PHC-ECE curriculum, which can lead to intense pressure on teachers to complete a lot of activities within 3 hours, 3 days per week. Teachers report that they often struggle to keep pace. In the KIIs, some teachers stated that the sessions are too short for the quantity of the content to teach, and do not feel that the policy cannot be amended. That said, teachers revealed in KIIs that they could count on supervisors for any support needed within and outside the curriculum.

The most common suggestion, advocated by several teachers, facilitators and parents, is the intensification of shift frequency. The preference is to have a shift of five consecutive days per week, like a regular school, in lieu of the current three days per week. According to teachers and facilitators, this consistency allows the children to adapt more quickly to the center and prevents them from forgetting what they learn. A five-day school week would also leave more time for the teachers to complete the provided curriculum. For parents, a week shift is also preferred as the children will learn more and be better prepared for public school.

While some stakeholders recommended a larger focus on academic learning, others demanded that more time be given to playing and activities. The increase in learning was mostly championed by parents as well as supervisors and a facilitator in Akkar. The program's main aim, they said, should be to teach children literacy and numeracy. On the other hand, many teachers and some parents and facilitators find the structure to be difficult for little children. They argue that at that age, children are mostly interested in playing and need physical activities and space. They cannot listen to the teacher for a long period of time, and sometimes complain about repeated activities or games that they do not like. As such, many suggestions were made about the use of multimedia or muppets during story time, the procurement of additional toys and the investment in playground items like swings or toboggans.

Recommendations

As this report highlights, the PHC-ECE program witnessed successes and challenges over the past two years. As the program supports young refugee children, one of the most reported successes was the improvement seen in these children. Nonetheless, achieving this result requires the overcoming of several obstacles, whether these originate from the community, the children or the teachers themselves. The following provides specific recommendations that emerge from this analysis:

- Identifying and implementing effective strategies for parent and community engagement that emphasize the importance of play-based learning to encourage enrollment, attendance and reduce attrition
- Strengthening support for children with disabilities and exploring the possibility of hiring a specialist to support teachers and staff with integration and adaptation strategies
- Adjusting the curriculum for 3-year-olds to ensure that there is adequate attention and time dedicated to the home-to-center transition
- Strengthening trainings for new teachers and facilitators, with an emphasis on positive discipline and communication techniques to support young children's learning and adiustment
- Re-assessing the shift cycle, to explore the possibility of 5-day-a-week programs, based on parent and staff demand
- Ensuring timely delivery of program materials and providing teachers and facilitators with appropriate visual resources and pictures to assist them in delivering activities and minimize the time required for preparations
- Reviewing the alignment between the PHC-ECE curriculum and the Ministry curriculum and ensuring that the Ministry's requirements are met, while maintaining the important elements of the PHC curriculum in a manner that is easy for teachers

Future research will be important to further explore the effects of preschool program, and the specific facilitators and barriers to achieving child development outcomes.

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Annex A: Example of Preschool Healing Classroom layout (for tent classrooms in informal settlements)

2

3 4M 8M 10

 Welcome area/storage for children's coats & belongings 2 Handwashing 3 Literacy Center 4 Peace Corner 5 Math 6 Art 7 Exploration 8 Whiteboard 9 Techer's Desk Second Classroom or "outdoor" play area

Annex B: Average scores of IDELA and TCO at baseline and endline (student= 530, teacher= 61)

0	Cultural	Baseline (A)		Endl	Endline (B)	
Outcome	Subtasks	mean	sd	mean	sd	(B-A)
Literacy	Expressive Vocabulary	20.8	14.4	43.6	23.4	22.8
	Print Awareness	35.4	34.5	65.4	35.2	30.0
	Letter Identification	3.4	11.8	13.6	22.8	10.2
	Letter Sounds	15.9	26.2	41.3	39.3	25.4
	Emergent Writing	17.8	32.0	47.6	41.1	29.8
	Oral Comprehension	50.9	36.4	76.3	29.4	25.4
	Literacy	24.0	17.6	48.0	23.5	23.9
Numeracy	Size Comparison	79.3	28.4	92.4	18.4	13.1
	Shape Identification	31.1	33.2	59.4	37.6	28.3
	Number Identification	39.9	30.6	70.1	29.7	30.2
	1-to-1 Correspondence	2.6	7.3	14.3	21.1	11.8
	Addition and Subtraction	19.4	24.9	39.9	34.1	20.4
	Numeracy	28.7	34.1	61.6	38.9	32.9
SEL	Self-Awareness	15.9	24.9	41.4	35.0	25.5
	Friends	31.0	17.1	54.2	22.1	23.2
	Emotional Awareness	56.1	19.1	73.2	18.6	17.1
	Empathy/ Perspective Taking	25.0	17.2	44.8	25.8	19.9
	Solving Conflict	34.5	31.6	63.0	33.5	28.5
	SEL	40.2	36.9	68.3	33.5	28.1
Motor skill	Copying Shapes	23.7	28.4	52.1	33.6	28.4
	Human Drawing	35.9	19.7	60.3	21.6	24.4
	Folding Paper	35.1	42.1	65.1	40.5	30.1
	Hopping	33.8	37.5	61.5	32.3	27.7
	Motor	30.4	32.7	51.7	37.0	21.2
Learning approach	Observed Persistence	41.4	36.5	71.3	34.3	29.9
	Item Persistence	35.2	29.3	62.4	28.2	27.2
	Learning approach	67.0	25.4	82.8	20.8	15.9
тсо	Playbased Learning	67.9	11.5	92.2	9.6	24.3
	Sense of Control	83.6	12.6	95.0	6.3	11.3
	Sense of Belonging	77.1	15.0	92.4	10.8	15.4
	Sense of Pride	73.0	14.8	88.4	10.1	15.4
	TCO	67.9	11.5	92.2	9.6	24.3

Annex C: Average scores of IDELA and MELE at baseline and endline

(student= 530, teacher= 61)

		MELE					
Outcome	IDELA	Play-Based Learning	Sense of Control	Sense of Belonging	Sense of Pride		
Literacy	Expressive Vocabulary	-0.08	0.05	-0.10	0.03		
	Print Awareness	0.21	0.31	0.18	0.30*		
	Letter Identification	0.18*	0.33**	0.02	0.25**		
	Letter Sounds	0.44***	0.56**	0.28*	0.42**		
	Emergent Writing	0.51***	0.62**	0.27	0.22		
	Oral Comprehension	0.00	0.31	0.30**	0.31**		
Numeracy	Size Comparison	0.23***	0.41***	0.28***	0.31***		
	Shape Identification	0.53***	0.86***	0.23*	0.35***		
	Number Identification	0.19**	0.17	-0.02	0.05		
	1-to-1 Correspondence	0.32**	0.31	0.19	0.52***		
	Addition and Subtraction	0.30*	0.56**	0.29*	0.86***		
SEL	Self-Awareness	0.12	0.35***	0.07	0.04		
	Friends	0.04	0.18	-0.09	0.08		
	Emotional Awareness	0.15	0.19	0.10	0.30**		
	Empathy/ Perspective Taking	0.00	0.45**	0.38***	0.18		
	Solving Conflict	-0.01	0.58**	0.43***	0.24		
Motor skill	Copying Shapes	0.34**	0.69**	0.26	0.33*		
	Human Drawing	0.21	0.07	0.05	-0.27*		
	Folding Paper	0.04	0.03	0.12	0.13		
	Hopping	-0.02	0.48**	0.42***	0.40***		
Learning approach	Observed Persistence	0.19**	0.18	0.12	-0.04		
	Item Persistence	0.05	0.23	0.09	-0.09		





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