

Extensive Independent RCT ECE Study Finds Significant Effect on Teacher Retention, Child Outcomes and Teacher Well-Being.

This brief summarizes findings from *The Creative Curriculum®* Implementation and Ecosystem Engagement (CCIEE) study, a randomized controlled trial independently conducted by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER).¹

The CCIEE study used a cluster-randomized design across two New Jersey state-funded preschool districts that included both public and private programs. Coaches and teachers were randomly assigned to a treatment or control group.

The CCIEE study sought to answer the question “Does implementing *The Creative Curriculum®* within a fully connected ecosystem—including aligned live professional development and coaching, plus asynchronous, on-demand courses—produce measurable improvements in teacher outcomes, classroom practice, and children’s development?”

The answer? Yes, the Teaching Strategies ecosystem drives impact across teacher retention and well-being, and child outcomes.

Treatment: Teachers implementing *The Creative Curriculum®* and using the full *Teaching Strategies®* ecosystem had access to synchronous (live) virtual and asynchronous (on-demand) professional development aligned with the *Teaching Strategies®* ecosystem, plus ongoing coaching supports, and the *GOLD®* assessment system.

Control: The control group had business-as-usual access to *The Creative Curriculum®* and may or may not have had access to or used the digital tools. All the control group users also used *GOLD®* as the assessment tool.

Teacher retention was tracked across the 3-year study period, and child outcomes were measured via growth (*GOLD®*) and via pre-post external assessments in year 3 (Fall 2023–Spring 2024).

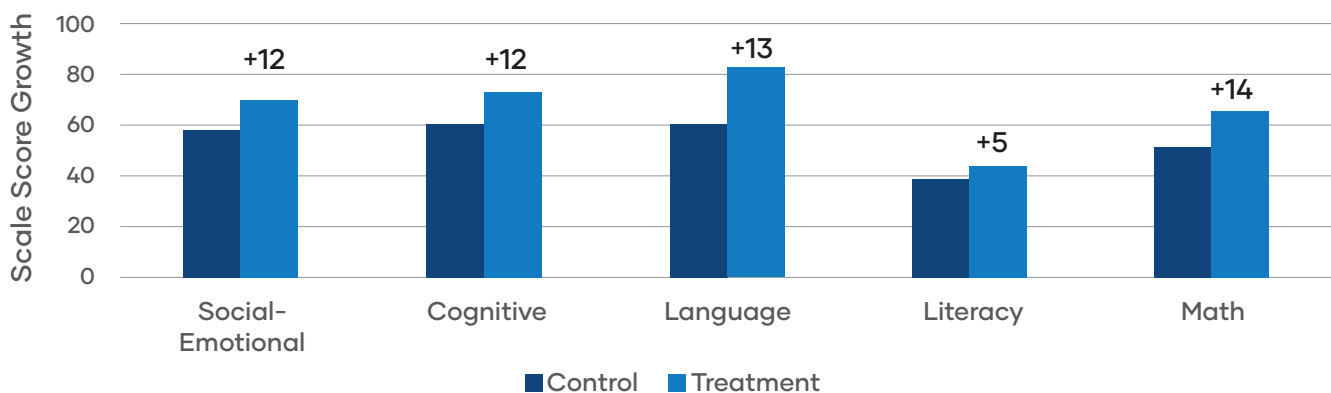
Key Finding #1: Significant Increase in Teacher Retention

In a field marked by persistent staffing instability, the CCIEE study found that teachers implementing the *Teaching Strategies®* ecosystem including sustained, synchronous and asynchronous, virtual professional learning were 59% more likely to remain in their roles at the end of the 3-year study period. The retention effect was large even for the least experienced teachers.

Key Finding #2: Significant Child Growth Across All Domains

Children in treatment classrooms demonstrated significantly more growth than children in control classrooms across every developmental domain measured by *GOLD®*, including social-emotional, cognitive, language, literacy, and math. *GOLD®* is the most widely used observational assessment in early childhood education.

Child Outcomes Results: *GOLD®* Growth



GOLD® analysis conducted by Teaching Strategies’ psychometrician

Furthermore, higher dosages of treatment yielded greater effect.

- Children in treatment classrooms with teachers who received higher amounts (dosages) of virtual, live professional development (PD) also demonstrated significantly higher outcomes on the external literacy assessment.
- Children in treatment classrooms whose teachers demonstrated higher levels of platform engagement showed significantly stronger outcomes on the external assessment of creativity.
- Children in classrooms where teachers were retained demonstrated significantly stronger scores on measures of executive function in both groups and peer play behaviors in the treatment group.

Key Finding #3: Stronger Educator Energy and Professional Accomplishment

Program leaders understand that educator morale matters, but it is rarely measured directly. The CCIEE study examined educator experience alongside classroom and child outcomes. Using a validated measure of educator burnout (the Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educators Survey), the study found that educators in the treatment classrooms reported significantly higher levels of:

- personal accomplishment and energy,
- feeling significantly less fatigued, and
- greater amounts of energy and enthusiasm for their work

What This All Means for Program Leaders

1. **Alignment drives impact.** Access to curriculum and digital tools is not enough. These findings suggest that using a curriculum that is an integrated part of a connected ecosystem with synchronous and asynchronous, ongoing, virtual professional learning produces measurable child development gains.
2. **Workforce stability is a core outcome of coherent implementation investments.** For both public AND private programs, the inclusion of integral professional learning supports as part of a coherent, connected ecosystem can function simultaneously as an instructional strategy as well as a workforce strategy, shaping both teaching quality and educator continuity. This finding is especially important given teacher retention is a critical pain point across many programs.
3. **Professional learning intensity and continuity matter.** Higher amounts of virtual, live professional development were associated with even stronger curriculum-aligned child gains. What makes a difference is not just providing tools and training, but ensuring that teachers receive consistent, aligned support over time.
4. **Educator well-being is not separate from instructional improvement.** It is part of the infrastructure that sustains implementation, retention, and child outcomes. When educators feel supported, energized, and effective, the investment in their well-being supports retention, stabilizes classrooms, and reinforces the developmental gains observed in children. Consider educator retention as a leading indicator of program health.

Additional Context: Curriculum Usability

Across both treatment and control classrooms, more than 90% of teachers reported that *The Creative Curriculum*[®] was easy to implement, and 91% reported that it was engaging for students. Both groups exclusively implemented *The Creative Curriculum*[®].

Disclosure

This brief presents selected findings from the published NIEER CCIEE working paper and introduces one new analysis by Teaching Strategies.

Explore More Results

To view more results from *The Creative Curriculum*[®] Implementation and Ecosystem Engagement (CCIEE) Study visit [this link](#) or scan the QR code.



i Nores, M., E. Harmeyer & W.S. Barnett (2026). *Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum Implementation and Ecosystem Engagement Study (CCIEE)*. Research Report. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research.