

REACH GOALS

REACH brings specialized training in positive guidance strategies and supporting children’s social-emotional development to teachers and directors across Arkansas. REACH seeks to help fill the gap in high quality in-service opportunities for child care providers who have found training ‘hard to reach.’ REACH targets child care center directors and teachers who may be geographically distant from the major educational centers in the state and/or who work for agencies that have difficulty releasing them for training. REACH is supported by the Arkansas Department of Human Services/Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education.

THE OVERALL GOAL OF THE REACH PROGRAM IS TO INCREASE THE CAPACITY OF TEACHERS TO SUPPORT SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN YOUNG CHILDREN.

REACH COMPONENTS

REACH consists of a series of trainings for directors and teachers as well as a variety of additional supports designed to give teachers the tools they need to practice their new skills in the classroom. Trainings are offered on-site at hours most convenient for staff (naptime, evening) and are repeated as needed so that the whole center can participate.

Director Trainings

- Creating a Plan to Support Children’s Social-Emotional Development
- Nurturing Staff to Nurture Children

Teacher Trainings: 1 per month

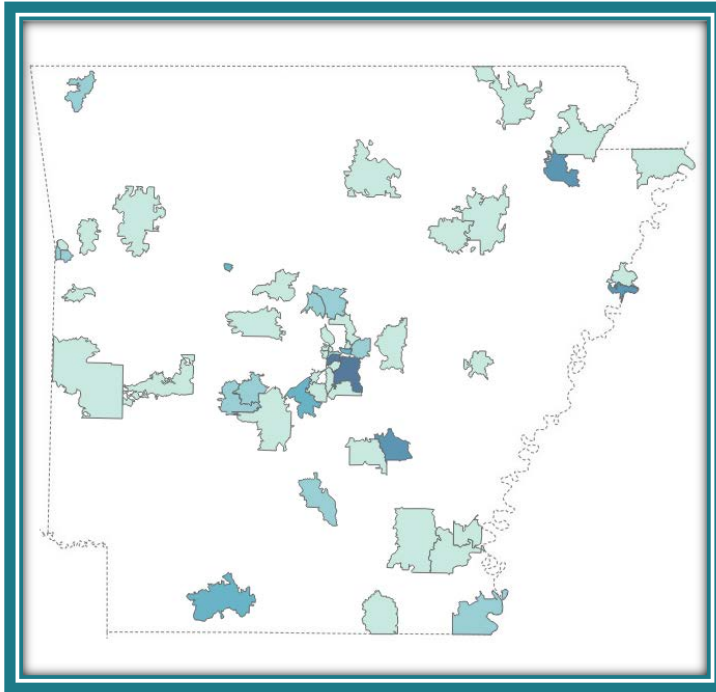
- A Nurturing Relationship with Every Child: Laying the Groundwork for Good Behavior
- Routines, Schedules, & Rituals: Tools for Effective Behavior Guidance
- Talking About Feelings & Solving Problems
- Positive Attention: How to Use It Effectively to Increase Good Behavior
- Choices: Giving Children the Power to “Be Good”
- Advanced Strategies: What to Do When a Child Needs Extra Help

Other REACH Components

- *Toolkit items:* Books, CDs, posters, puppets & other teaching tools to support classroom practice of new skills.
- *Calendar cards:* Daily visual reminders to practice new skills.
- *Parent pages:* Helps expose parents to the same concepts teachers are learning.
- *Classroom coaching visit:* Support for practicing new skills after each training.
- *Action plans:* Teacher commits to try 2 new skills per training - shared with coach.
- *Coaching emails/texts:* Support between trainings.

REACHING THE STATE

REACH trainers travel around the state to communities that may be underserved with training opportunities.



SINCE ITS INCEPTION, REACH HAS COMPLETED TRAINING WITH:

- 1375 PARTICIPANTS.
- 90 CENTERS.
- 31 COUNTIES.

Of those teachers who have completed trainings with REACH, half (50%) have been in the ECE profession at least 6 years. Most staff in attendance worked directly with children as teachers or assistant teachers (70%), and half (51%) work with preschool aged children. As expected given our target population, less than a quarter of staff had their Child Development Associates degree (22%) or other certification (20%). One-third (33%) of training participants had an Associate’s degree or higher.

REACH EVALUATION PLAN

The evaluation component of REACH was designed to assess change over time in the classroom environment, child behavior, and teacher knowledge and practices. The design is two-fold: 1) to conduct independent observations of the classroom using trained research assistants, and 2) to allow staff to reflect on self-efficacy of implementation and strategies learned, trainer knowledge, and training content through use of training feedback forms. Thus, we were able to evaluate teacher capacity to support children’s social-emotional development as evidenced by:

- ❖ *Teacher perception of changes* in his/her own behavior and implementation of REACH strategies.
- ❖ Classroom observations by trained data collectors to determine *observed changes in teacher behavior, use of materials and classroom tone.*
- ❖ Teacher and director *satisfaction* with REACH through pre and post surveys.



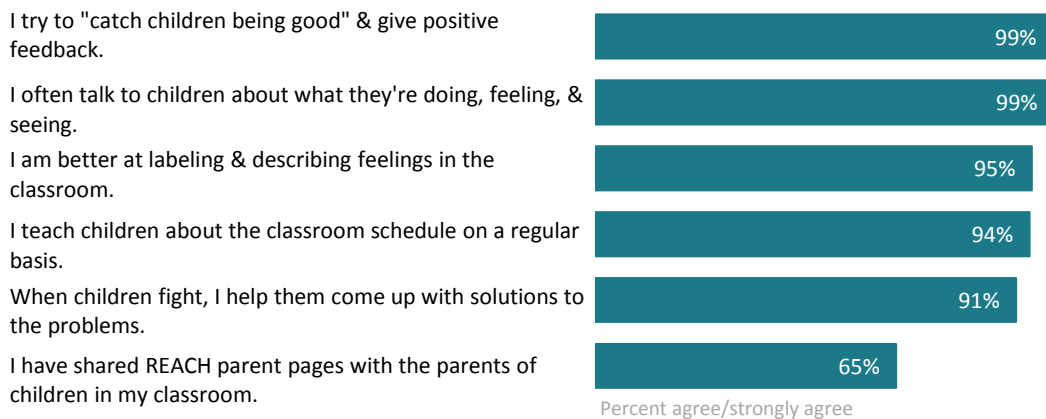
ANNUAL REPORT FY17-18

Sample sizes differ throughout the narrative below. Some data were only collected on individuals who work in a classroom that could be observed by data collectors. Other data were inclusive of all staff who were trained, regardless of if they were observed in a classroom (e.g., directors and other administrative staff, cooks, van drivers, etc.). High rates of staff turnover impacted our post-test data collection, reducing the numbers.

TEACHER PERCEPTION OF CHANGE IN THEIR OWN BEHAVIOR

Once a center completes the REACH training program, teachers are asked to complete a closing survey that allows them to examine change in teachers' perception of their own behavior. Specifically, we asked teachers to rate their utilization of key REACH strategies. These results are summarized below.

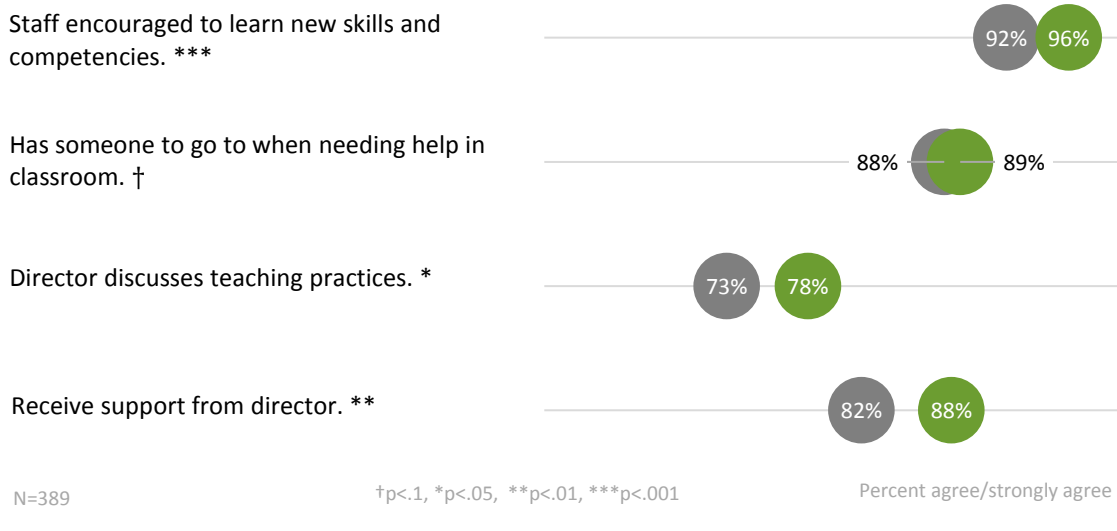
Teachers are using the REACH strategies.



N=391

At both baseline and follow-up observations, we also asked teachers to think about their center climate. Significant increases were seen, specifically with regard to engagement with and support from center directors.

From baseline to follow-up, teachers reported an increase in feeling supported by their center directors.





OBSERVED CHANGES IN CLASSROOMS


Independent classroom observations by trained research staff include ratings of teacher-child interactions and the classroom environment collected at the beginning and end of the training series. The classroom observation includes a revised version of the *Arnett Caregiver Interaction Scale* and a *Social-Emotional Classroom Quick Screen*. In this section, we report on the impact of REACH coaching and training on classroom outcomes, as observed by trained research staff.

As seen below, from pre- to posttest, classrooms demonstrated an increased capacity to support children’s social-emotional development. This is evidenced by an increase in use of appropriate classroom level supports, such as visuals for teaching emotions, use of daily schedules, and availability of emotions books for children.

Increases in Supportive Classroom Environment

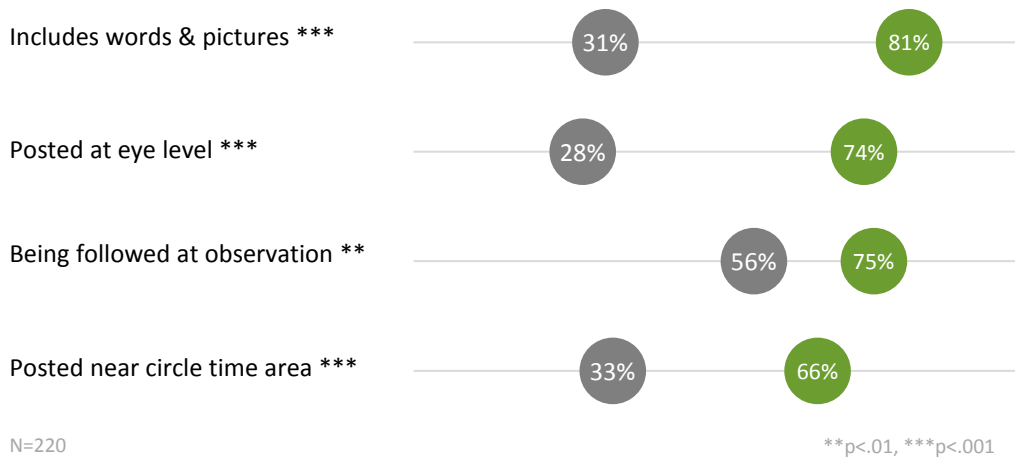
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Almost **tripled** the number of classrooms with visuals for teaching emotions.
- 

Increased the number using daily schedules in recommended ways from 9% to 49% (see chart below).
- 

Significant increase in the number of classrooms with social-emotional books available for children.

Teachers increased their use of daily schedules from baseline to follow-up.



Arnett Caregiver Interaction Scale. The Arnett is an observational rating scale of teacher interactions with children in the classroom completed by trained research staff. It consists of items that assess the teacher’s sensitivity, punitiveness, detachment, and permissiveness with regard to engaging and disciplining children. Significant improvements were seen on the total Arnett Caregiver Interaction score over time for 401 REACH teachers, with teacher warmth and responsiveness increasing the most from baseline to follow-up. Teachers also showed a significant *decline* in harsh and detached behaviors, as well as ineffective discipline. Specifically, based on observations prior to REACH and at the end of REACH, we noticed the following improvements in teacher-child interactions.



Note: These are sample items from the data collection tool used.

Classrooms also demonstrated significant improvement in:

- ❖ Positive child/child and child/staff interactions.
- ❖ Teachers' helping children label and express their feelings.
- ❖ Teachers' use of transitions to help children move smoothly between activities.
- ❖ Teachers using opportunities to build both language skills and relationships through conversations with children.
- ❖ Reductions in child verbal aggression.

TEACHER & DIRECTOR SATISFACTION

At the end of the final REACH training (Teacher Workshop 6), participants are asked to complete a training feedback form. This form allows the participants to rate how useful they feel the REACH program is and to suggest changes for improvements to our coaching and training program. The figure below summarizes these results, with the percentages representing how many participants agreed or strongly agreed with each statement.

Trainings and materials were effective and useful.

99%

Trainings were clear and effective.
Trainer responded to questions and was knowledgeable.

98%

Good audio-visuals were used.
Families will benefit from knowledge participants gained.
Participants have used and feel comfortable using REACH strategies.
Participants are using REACH materials.

N=288

Additional post-training survey results of both teachers and directors suggest that most are satisfied with the REACH training and saw changes in their center/classroom as a result of REACH.

Teachers liked REACH and saw changes in their classroom.

I would recommend REACH trainings to teachers at other centers.

97%

As a result of REACH, I made changes that have improved the way things work in my classroom.

97%

I developed a good relationship with my REACH coach.

96%

Because of REACH, I saw a difference in children's behavior.

89%

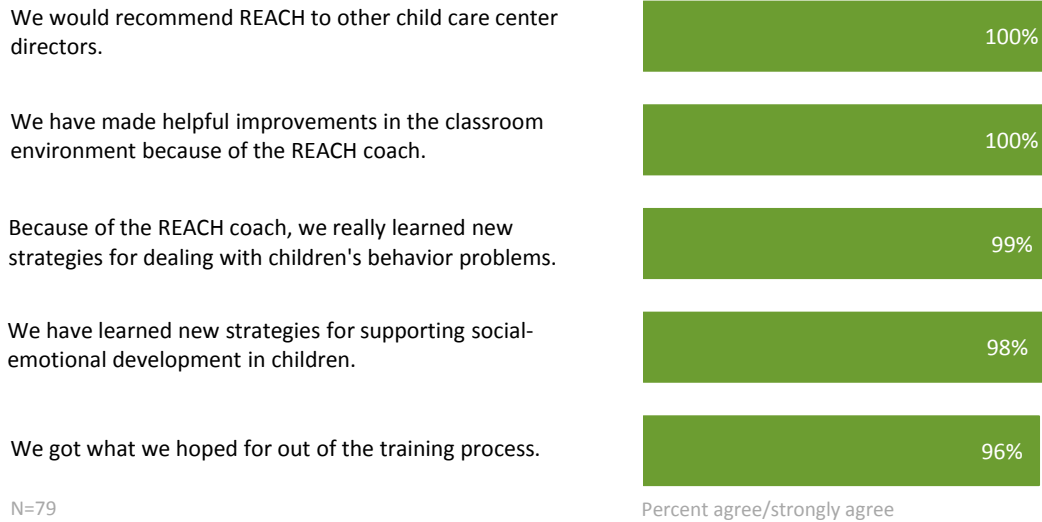
As a result of REACH, I have more positive interactions with the families I serve.

81%

N=388

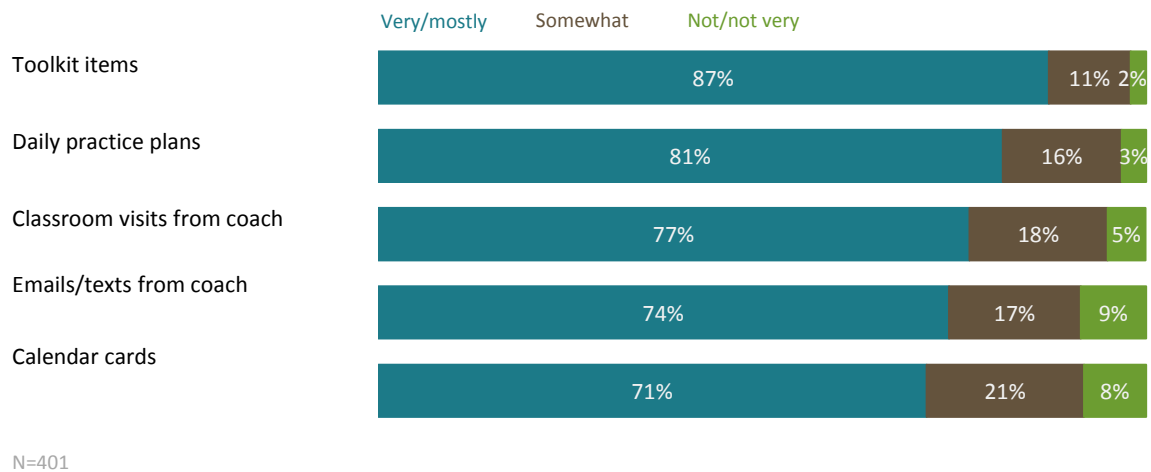
Percent agree/strongly agree

Directors were also highly satisfied with REACH.



Teachers were asked to rate the helpfulness of specific REACH components beyond the training itself. The figure below summarizes their feedback.

Teachers found most aspects of the program useful.



COMMENTS FROM DIRECTORS & TEACHERS

Teachers:

“Learning new ways to talk to children and how to calm them down has been very helpful in my classroom.”

“I think the most important thing I learned from REACH training was the steps: day to day habits, joining play, and relaxed talk.”

“[I learned] to focus on why a student is behaving a certain way and understanding their perspective rather than just getting angry at their behavior.”

Directors:

“Our staff has a calmer demeanor with the children, and I really think it is because they feel better equipped for most of our daily situations.”

“I have noticed some of the children that have had issues in the past no longer have the same issues. I have also noticed how some of the staff have changed the way they speak to the children. [And] I have changed the way I speak to the staff.”

“The strategies that were taught helped the teachers with dealing with behavior. And how to work without getting stressed. The trainers reinforcing the next day helped the teachers as well by putting into perspective.”

SUMMARY

This evaluation provides strong evidence that the REACH program is meeting its goal to increase the capacity of ‘hard to reach’ teachers to support children’s social and emotional development. REACH has successfully engaged teachers in diverse centers in a range of Arkansas communities. REACH evaluation results based on both teacher reports and independent observations show positive impacts on nurturing teacher-child interactions and the use of strategies to support children’s social and emotional skill development.