New Jersey Preschool Quality Evaluation Study
Spring 2016
Summary Report

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Study Overview

The following report details the findings of the New Jersey Preschool Quality Evaluation Study for the 2015-2016 school year for a sample of 300 classrooms across the 31 former Abbott districts in New Jersey, as well as four additional districts. This study is the continuation of work begun by the Early Learning Improvement Consortium's statewide evaluation of Abbott preschool program quality, conducted from the 2002-2003 through the 2008-2009 school year. During these years, the Department of Early Childhood Education (DECE) has continued to collect classroom quality data on various measures of quality. This report describes the results of the classroom observations conducted since 2002 through this past spring on quality classroom measures for all of the districts sampled. Data was not collected during the 2009-2010 or 2011-2012 school year, and in 2012-13, information on classroom quality was collected using only the CLASS tool for selected districts. PRISM observations began for select districts in the 2012-2013 school year. Consequently, the findings that are presented from previous years will show several gaps in quality information.

For this first time this year, a new version of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-3) was administered in each classroom. The ECERS-3 was published in 2014 and is quite similar to the ECERS-R in terms of scope and overall scoring. Scores are comparable to the ECERS-R, though there are existing differences in some areas, which are depicted in more detail below.

Measures

In prior years leading up to the 2015-16 school year, data collection included the following three observation measures:
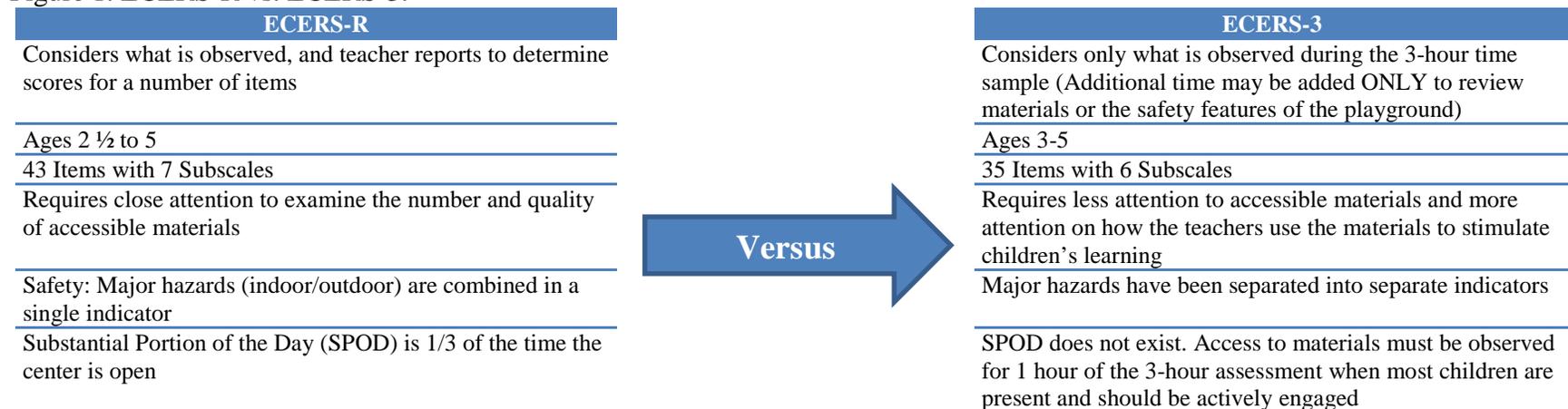- ***The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale−Revised (ECERS-R)***. The ECERS-R is an observation and rating instrument for preschool classrooms serving children aged three to five. The total ECERS-R score represents an average of the scores on the 43 items. A rating of 1 indicates inadequate quality, a 3 indicates minimal quality, a 5 indicates good quality, and a 7 indicates excellent quality. Average scores across the classrooms for each of the 7 subscales and item level scores for previous years are presented in Tables 2.1 and 2.2 below.

- ***The Supports for Early Literacy Assessment (SELA).*** The SELA examines classroom materials and activities used to support children's emerging literacy skills. The scale includes 16 items scored on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (minimal evidence) to 5 (all features evident). The SELA looks closely at classroom practices associated with children's literacy development. Table 3shows the average scores and ranges for each item, and the total average for all the classrooms observed for previous years.
- ***The Preschool Rating Instrument for Science and Mathematics (PRISM)***, an unpublished, updated version of the Preschool Classroom Mathematics Inventory (PCMI).The PRISM assesses the classroom's materials and teaching practices in relation to science and mathematics. It was utilized for the first time during the 2012-13 school year in 8 districts across New Jersey. The instrument is a revised version of the PCMI with an additional 5 items related to classroom-based science materials and interactions. In total, the PRISM consists of 16 items that measure the presence of classroom materials and teaching supports around mathematics and science in a comprehensive way. All items in this 16-item scale are scored on a 7-point scale, from 1 (minimal evidence) to 7 (all features evident). Table 4 shows average scores for each PRISM item for previous years in your district.

As mentioned, data collection in the current 2015-16 school year included the following observation measure:
- ***The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale−Three (ECERS-3)***. The ECERS-3 is an observation and rating instrument for preschool classrooms serving children aged three to five. The total ECERS-3 score represents an average of the scores on the 35 items. A rating of 1 indicates inadequate quality, a 3 indicates minimal quality, a 5 indicates good quality, and a 7 indicates excellent quality. The figure below provides an overview of notable differences between ECERS-R and ECERS-3.

Figure 1. ECERS-R vs. ECERS-3.

ECERS-R	ECERS-3
Considers what is observed, and teacher reports to determine scores for a number of items	Considers only what is observed during the 3-hour time sample (Additional time may be added ONLY to review materials or the safety features of the playground)
Ages 2 ½ to 5	Ages 3-5
43 Items with 7 Subscales	35 Items with 6 Subscales
Requires close attention to examine the number and quality of accessible materials	Requires less attention to accessible materials and more attention on how the teachers use the materials to stimulate children's learning
Safety: Major hazards (indoor/outdoor) are combined in a single indicator	Major hazards have been separated into separate indicators
Substantial Portion of the Day (SPOD) is 1/3 of the time the center is open	SPOD does not exist. Access to materials must be observed for 1 hour of the 3-hour assessment when most children are present and should be actively engaged

Versus

As with the previous version of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-R), the most updated notes for clarification (published online at http://ersi.info/ecers3_notes.html in August, 2015) were utilized when scoring all classrooms in this sample. These notes continue to be updated periodically.

Sample

The sample included a total of 293 randomly selected classrooms in 31 Abbott districts as well as four additional districts. We aimed to observe a total of 300 classrooms but a small number of classrooms across several districts could not be observed due to scheduling issues. For the first time this year, we included a small sample of classrooms in charter schools. Table 1 describes the number of classrooms observed by auspice. Statewide, 13.7% of funded classrooms are made up of Head Start programs, 44.4% are district classrooms and 40.3% are provider classrooms. An additional 1.7% of the total classrooms are in charter schools. The numbers below indicate that the sample for this evaluation was in line with statewide averages and thus representative of overall quality in New Jersey.

Table 1. Sample Description by Auspice.

	Number of Classrooms	Percent
District	130	44.4%
Provider	118	40.3%
Head Start	40	13.7%
Charter	5	1.7%
Total	293	100%

Data Collection

A random sample was drawn by NIEER from the total universe of classrooms provided by DECE in early March. District supervisors and superintendents were subsequently informed of the evaluation via email with letters attached from NIEER. Training and reliability were completed by NIEER observers in March and all data was collected between mid-March and mid-June. NIEER observers called in advance to schedule appointments for observations in individual sites, but teacher names were not disclosed until the day of the observation.

Results

The results from previous years' evaluations can be found in Tables 2 through 4. The ECERS-R, SELA and PRISM instruments were not administered in the current school year, however these tables are provided simply to show the progression of classroom supports for overall classroom quality, in addition to literacy, math and science over time through the 2014-2015 school year. Tables 2.1 and 2.2 present the averages scores on the ECERS-R both by subscale and by item from each year in which observations were completed. Note the asterisk at the bottom of each table indicates that during the 2012-13 school year, observations using the ECERS-R were only administered in a select sample of districts. Table 3 shows the average scores on the SELA for each item, and the total average for each year in which observations were completed from 2007-08 through 2014-15. Table 4 shows average scores across the 8 districts in which the PRISM was used in 2013 and across all 31 districts represented in the subsequent two years' evaluations. Tables 5.1 and 5.2 provides results from ECERS-3 observations conducted in the current (2015-2016) school year. Findings are first presented for the overall sample of randomly selected classrooms in Figures 2.1 and 2.2, and subsequently by auspice, Figures 2.2-2.6. These figures are also presented to illustrate levels of quality within subscales for the current school year. An important note is that scores for the 2012-2013 evaluation reflect only the scores for 8 districts in which ECERS, SELA, PRISM observations were conducted. The remaining districts were observed with the CLASS in 2012-13. A discussion section is presented at the conclusion of the report with highlights of low and high scores, as well as explanations of general trends.

Table 2.1. Average scores by ECERS-R subscale and overall by year.

ECERS-R Subscale	Mean 07-08 (range)	Mean 08-09 (range)	Mean 10-11 (range)	Mean* 12-13 (range)	Mean 13-14 (range)	Mean 14-15 (range)
Space and Furnishings This subscale addresses the areas of indoor and outdoor space, room arrangement, organization, display, furnishings and equipment.	5.03 (2.38-7.00)	5.03 (3.13-7.00)	5.16 (2.50-7.00)	5.05 (2.50-7.00)	5.17 (2.43-7.00)	5.22 (2.63-7.00)
Personal Care Routines This subscale addresses practices around daily routines like greeting and departure, meals, naptime, and toileting as well as health and safety practices.	4.29 (1.67-7.00)	4.34 (1.00-7.00)	4.49 (1.17-7.00)	4.63 (1.33-7.00)	4.12 (1.50-7.00)	4.40 (1.33-7.00)
Language-Reasoning This area addresses the classroom's formal and informal communication, language and reasoning opportunities.	5.46 (2.00-7.00)	5.56 (1.75-7.00)	5.84 (2.50-7.00)	4.74 (2.50-6.75)	4.90 (1.50-7.00)	5.14 (1.50-7.00)
Activities This subscale looks at the learning opportunities in each of the areas of the classroom including fine motor, art, music/movement, blocks, sand/water, dramatic play, nature/science, math/number, use of video/computer, and diversity.	4.85 (1.60-7.00)	4.86 (2.50-7.00)	5.00 (2.30-7.00)	5.10 (3.20-7.00)	5.01 (2.60-6.90)	5.14 (2.20-7.00)
Interactions This area addresses supervision of children, discipline, staff-child interactions, and interactions among children.	6.44 (1.60-7.00)	6.33 (1.80-7.00)	5.98 (1.40-7.00)	6.17 (1.00-7.00)	6.22 (1.00-7.00)	6.33 (1.60-7.00)
Program Structure This area addresses classroom operations and schedule, including groupings, transitions and flexibility.	5.41 (1.00-7.00)	5.45 (1.67-7.00)	5.41 (1.33-7.00)	5.92 (1.33-7.00)	6.04 (1.00-7.00)	6.09 (1.67-7.00)
Parents and Staff This area addresses the program's supports for both parents and staff, including opportunities to evaluate, communicate child-related information, family involvement and professional development opportunities.	5.59 (2.67-7.00)	5.77 (2.67-7.00)	5.75 (2.17-7.00)	5.95 (4.00-7.00)	5.88 (3.17-7.00)	6.32 (3.00-7.00)
Overall Average Score	**5.20 (2.57-6.95)**	**5.23 (3.34-6.71)**	**5.30 (2.52-6.67)**	**5.31 (3.37-6.71)**	**5.22 (2.63-6.90)**	**5.43 (3.38-6.88)**

*These means reflect the following districts only: Camden, East Orange, Irvington, Jersey City, Long Branch, Newark, Paterson, and Phillipsburg

Table 2.2. Average scores by ECERS-R item by year.

ECERS-R Item	Mean 07-08 (range)	Mean 08-09 (range)	Mean 10-11 (range)	Mean 12-13* (range)	Mean 13-14 (range)	Mean 14-15 (range)
1. Indoor space	4.79 (1.00-7.00)	4.86 (1.00-7.00)	5.22 (1.00-7.00)	4.65 (1.00-7.00)	5.32 (1.00-7.00)	5.12 (1.00-7.00)
2. Furniture for routine care	6.60 (1.00-7.00)	6.66 (1.00-7.00)	6.59 (1.00-7.00)	6.31 (2.00-7.00)	6.10 (2.00-7.00)	6.23 (1.00-7.00)
3. Furnishings for relaxation	5.76 (1.00-7.00)	5.73 (1.00-7.00)	5.65 (1.00-7.00)	5.09 (1.00-7.00)	5.50 (1.00-7.00)	5.42 (1.00-7.00)
4. Room arrangement	5.38 (1.00-7.00)	5.18 (1.00-7.00)	5.73 (1.00-7.00)	6.42 (1.00-7.00)	6.30 (1.00-7.00)	6.14 (1.00-7.00)
5. Space for privacy	5.01 (1.00-7.00)	5.05 (1.00-7.00)	5.03 (1.00-7.00)	5.23 (2.00-7.00)	5.17 (1.00-7.00)	5.26 (1.00-7.00)
6. Child-related display	5.58 (1.00-7.00)	5.45 (1.00-7.00)	5.83 (1.00-7.00)	5.63 (1.00-7.00)	5.51 (1.00-7.00)	5.58 (1.00-7.00)
7. Space for gross motor	3.49 (1.00-7.00)	3.31 (1.00-7.00)	3.19 (1.00-7.00)	3.15 (1.00-7.00)	3.50 (1.00-7.00)	3.48 (1.00-7.00)
8. Gross motor equipment	3.65 (1.00-7.00)	3.97 (1.00-7.00)	4.08 (1.00-7.00)	3.92 (1.00-7.00)	4.02 (1.00-7.00)	4.50 (1.00-7.00)
9. Greeting/departing	6.16 (1.00-7.00)	6.41 (1.00-7.00)	6.31 (1.00-7.00)	5.98 (1.00-7.00)	6.10 (1.00-7.00)	6.29 (1.00-7.00)
10. Meals/snacks	3.73 (1.00-7.00)	3.58 (1.00-7.00)	3.92 (1.00-7.00)	5.08 (1.00-7.00)	4.21 (1.00-7.00)	4.23 (1.00-7.00)
11. Nap/rest	3.91 (1.00-7.00)	3.82 (1.00-7.00)	4.54 (1.00-7.00)	4.08 (1.00-7.00)	3.29 (1.00-7.00)	3.76 (1.00-7.00)
12. Toileting/diapering	4.71 (1.00-7.00)	5.12 (1.00-7.00)	4.93 (1.00-7.00)	4.15 (1.00-7.00)	3.31 (1.00-7.00)	3.47 (1.00-7.00)
13. Health practices	4.63 (1.00-7.00)	4.64 (1.00-7.00)	4.51 (1.00-7.00)	5.05 (1.00-7.00)	3.51 (1.00-7.00)	4.45 (1.00-7.00)
14. Safety practices	2.61 (1.00-7.00)	2.47 (1.00-7.00)	2.74 (1.00-7.00)	3.46 (1.00-7.00)	4.19 (1.00-7.00)	4.18 (1.00-7.00)
15. Books and pictures	5.17 (1.00-7.00)	5.01 (1.00-7.00)	5.13 (1.00-7.00)	5.15 (1.00-7.00)	5.35 (1.00-7.00)	5.33 (1.00-7.00)
16. Encouraging children to communicate	6.48 (1.00-7.00)	6.53 (1.00-7.00)	6.70 (1.00-7.00)	6.07 (2.00-7.00)	5.63 (1.00-7.00)	6.12 (2.00-7.00)
17. Using language to develop reasoning skills	4.24 (1.00-7.00)	4.70 (1.00-7.00)	5.29 (1.00-7.00)	2.29 (1.00-6.00)	3.34 (1.00-7.00)	3.54 (1.00-7.00)
18. Informal use of language	6.00 (1.00-7.00)	6.00 (1.00-7.00)	6.25 (1.00-7.00)	5.45 (1.00-7.00)	4.81 (1.00-7.00)	5.56 (1.00-7.00)
19. Fine motor	5.63 (1.00-7.00)	5.57 (1.00-7.00)	5.56 (1.00-7.00)	5.22 (3.00-7.00)	5.72 (3.00-7.00)	5.63 (2.00-7.00)

20. Art	5.18 (1.00-7.00)	5.19 (1.00-7.00)	5.29 (1.00-7.00)	5.02 (2.00-7.00)	5.13 (2.00-7.00)	5.46 (2.00-7.00)
21. Music/movement	4.90 (1.00-7.00)	4.78 (1.00-7.00)	5.03 (1.00-7.00)	5.26 (1.00-7.00)	4.99 (1.00-7.00)	5.24 (1.00-7.00)
22. Blocks	4.81 (1.00-7.00)	4.68 (1.00-7.00)	5.05 (1.00-7.00)	5.27 (2.00-7.00)	5.32 (1.00-7.00)	5.30 (1.00-7.00)
23. Sand/water	5.14 (1.00-7.00)	5.38 (1.00-7.00)	5.47 (1.00-7.00)	5.41 (1.00-7.00)	5.25 (1.00-7.00)	5.38 (1.00-7.00)
24. Dramatic play	4.71 (1.00-7.00)	4.77 (1.00-7.00)	4.73 (1.00-7.00)	4.65 (2.00-7.00)	4.71 (2.00-7.00)	4.96 (2.00-7.00)
25. Nature/science	4.19 (1.00-7.00)	4.15 (1.00-7.00)	4.74 (1.00-7.00)	4.70 (1.00-7.00)	4.69 (1.00-7.00)	4.89 (1.00-7.00)
26. Math/number	5.15 (1.00-7.00)	4.96 (1.00-7.00)	5.35 (1.00-7.00)	5.06 (2.00-7.00)	5.40 (2.00-7.00)	5.28 (2.00-7.00)
27. Use of TV, video, computer	4.02 (1.00-7.00)	4.11 (1.00-7.00)	4.52 (1.00-7.00)	4.94 (2.00-7.00)	3.08 (1.00-7.00)	3.32 (1.00-7.00)
28. Promoting acceptance of diversity	4.65 (1.00-7.00)	4.95 (1.00-7.00)	4.29 (1.00-7.00)	5.51 (2.00-7.00)	5.53 (2.00-7.00)	5.72 (2.00-7.00)
29. Supervision of gross motor	6.21 (1.00-7.00)	6.17 (1.00-7.00)	5.66 (1.00-7.00)	6.02 (1.00-7.00)	5.83 (1.00-7.00)	6.08 (1.00-7.00)
30. General supervision	6.46 (1.00-7.00)	6.00 (1.00-7.00)	5.27 (1.00-7.00)	6.25 (1.00-7.00)	6.15 (1.00-7.00)	6.27 (1.00-7.00)
31. Discipline	6.09 (1.00-7.00)	6.09 (1.00-7.00)	5.95 (1.00-7.00)	5.99 (1.00-7.00)	6.24 (1.00-7.00)	6.28 (1.00-7.00)
32. Staff-child interactions	6.79 (1.00-7.00)	6.70 (1.00-7.00)	6.45 (1.00-7.00)	6.37 (1.00-7.00)	6.55 (1.00-7.00)	6.57 (1.00-7.00)
33. Interactions among children	6.63 (1.00-7.00)	6.71 (1.00-7.00)	6.57 (1.00-7.00)	6.20 (1.00-7.00)	6.37 (1.00-7.00)	6.43 (1.00-7.00)
34. Schedule	4.47 (1.00-7.00)	4.74 (1.00-7.00)	4.61 (1.00-7.00)	5.67 (2.00-7.00)	5.76 (1.00-7.00)	5.57 (2.00-7.00)
35. Free play	5.90 (1.00-7.00)	5.70 (1.00-7.00)	5.72 (1.00-7.00)	5.68 (1.00-7.00)	6.12 (1.00-7.00)	6.08 (2.00-7.00)
36. Group time	5.83 (1.00-7.00)	5.69 (1.00-7.00)	5.64 (1.00-7.00)	6.30 (1.00-7.00)	6.23 (1.00-7.00)	6.49 (1.00-7.00)
37. Provisions for children with disabilities	5.80 (1.00-7.00)	6.42 (1.00-7.00)	6.22 (1.00-7.00)	6.55 (1.00-7.00)	6.07 (1.00-7.00)	6.57 (1.00-7.00)
38. Provisions for parents	5.47 (1.00-7.00)	5.77 (1.00-7.00)	5.76 (1.00-7.00)	6.45 (4.00-7.00)	5.69 (1.00-7.00)	6.19 (2.00-7.00)
39. Provisions for personal needs of staff	5.13 (1.00-7.00)	5.27 (1.00-7.00)	5.12 (1.00-7.00)	4.21 (1.00-7.00)	4.65 (1.00-7.00)	5.09 (1.00-7.00)
40. Provisions for professional needs of staff	4.81 (1.00-7.00)	5.17 (1.00-7.00)	5.20 (1.00-7.00)	5.94 (1.00-7.00)	5.73 (1.00-7.00)	6.42 (1.00-7.00)

41. Staff interaction and cooperation	6..60 (1.00-7.00)	6.70 (1.00-7.00)	6.61 (1.00-7.00)	6.51 (1.00-7.00)	6.65 (1.00-7.00)	6.72 (1.00-7.00)
42.Supervision/evaluation of staff	6.41 (1.00-7.00)	6.52 (1.00-7.00)	6.58 (1.00-7.00)	6.62 (4.00-7.00)	6.55 (3.00-7.00)	6.90 (4.00-7.00)
43. Opportunities for professional growth	5.12 (1.00-7.00)	5.17 (1.00-7.00)	5.25 (1.00-7.00)	5.98 (1.00-7.00)	6.06 (2.00-7.00)	6.58 (1.00-7.00)

*These means reflect the following districts only: Camden, East Orange, Irvington, Jersey City, Long Branch, Newark, Paterson, and Phillipsburg

Table 3. SELA item and overall scores by year.

SELA Item	Mean 07-08 (range)	Mean 08-09 (range)	Mean 10-11 (range)	Mean* 12-13 (range)	Mean 13-14 (range)	Mean 14-15 (range)
1. Using print in the environment for a purpose. Purposefully using labels and signs, conveying a clear message and capturing children's attention.	4.33 (2.00-5.00)	4.38 (1.00-5.00)	4.31 (1.00-5.00)	4.20 (1.00-5.00)	4.30 (2.00-5.00)	4.39 (2.00-5.00)
2. Creating inviting places to look at books. Creating a comfortable and easily accessible "cozy" reading area with several books on display.	4.59 (2.00-5.00)	4.52 (1.00-5.00)	4.63 (2.00-5.00)	4.48 (2.00-5.00)	4.40 (1.00-5.00)	4.47 (2.00-5.00)
3. Inviting interest in a wide variety of books in the classroom. Introducing books on different topics (especially those that reflect the children's linguistic backgrounds) within the classroom and updating them throughout the school year.	4.20 (2.00-5.00)	4.30 (1.00-5.00)	4.28 (1.00-5.00)	4.12 (2.00-5.00)	4.28 (1.00-5.00)	4.27 (1.00-5.00)
4. Writing materials are available and easy to use. Paper and writing materials are available in the main writing area and other areas as well.	4.53 (1.00-5.00)	4.63 (1.00-5.00)	4.69 (3.00-5.00)	4.54 (3.00-5.00)	4.49 (2.00-5.00)	4.65 (2.00-5.00)
5. A variety of literacy items and props are used in the pretend play area. New literacy items and props are introduced at least once a month.	3.65 (1.00-5.00)	3.91 (1.00-5.00)	3.89 (1.00-5.00)	3.60 (1.00-5.00)	3.81 (1.00-5.00)	3.88 (1.00-5.00)
6. Teachers encourage and extend oral language. Taking time to talk to individual children expressing interest and extending conversations with open-ended statements and expansions.	4.12 (1.00-5.00)	4.17 (1.00-5.00)	4.43 (2.00-5.00)	3.78 (1.00-5.00)	3.62 (1.00-5.00)	3.86 (1.00-5.00)
7. Using language that introduces new words, concepts and linguistic structures. Using rich vocabulary including new words, descriptive language, and explanations that are more complex than children would normally use.	3.63 (1.00-5.00)	3.71 (1.00-5.00)	3.97 (1.00-5.00)	3.34 (1.00-5.00)	3.21 (1.00-5.00)	3.50 (1.00-5.00)
8. Organizing activities that promote language development. Organizing a variety of activities (e.g., reading informational books, engaging hands-on activities) while remaining flexible to the children's interests.	3.90 (1.00-5.00)	4.03 (1.00-5.00)	4.34 (2.00-5.00)	3.85 (1.00-5.00)	3.37 (1.00-5.00)	3.66 (1.00-5.00)
9. Sharing books to build language, knowledge, and a love of book reading. Reading various types of books daily to children in a lively and engaging manner, inviting children's involvement.	4.47 (1.00-5.00)	4.42 (1.00-5.00)	4.45 (1.00-5.00)	4.19 (2.00-5.00)	4.32 (1.00-5.00)	4.32 (1.00-5.00)
10. Calling attention to the functions and features of print. Identifying the features of a book (author and title), demonstrating how we read print by moving finger along the print as well as recognizing and writing meaningful words.	3.57 (1.00-5.00)	3.64 (1.00-5.00)	3.84 (1.00-5.00)	3.38 (1.00-5.00)	3.50 (1.00-5.00)	3.59 (1.00-5.00)
11. Drawing children's attention to the sounds they hear in words. Using a variety of activities such as reading books with rhymes and interesting sounds, singing songs, and emphasizing the initial letter in a word.	2.78 (1.00-5.00)	2.79 (1.00-5.00)	3.23 (1.00-5.00)	3.15 (1.00-5.00)	3.18 (1.00-5.00)	3.17 (1.00-5.00)

12. *Helping children recognize letters*. Pointing out letters in words and playing games such as letter bingo, reading alphabet books and practicing writing names using a variety of methods in a fun and engaging way.	3.33 (1.00-5.00)	3.47 (1.00-5.00)	3.61 (1.00-5.00)	3.20 (1.00-5.00)	3.25 (1.00-5.00)	3.46 (1.00-5.00)
13. *Promoting children's interest in writing*. Displaying children's writing in classroom and showing positive response to all kinds of writing efforts. Encouraging children to write their names and taking dictation of a story or description of a picture.	3.87 (1.00-5.00)	3.86 (1.00-5.00)	4.04 (1.00-5.00)	3.57 (1.00-5.00)	3.36 (1.00-5.00)	3.63 (1.00-5.00)
14. *Promoting home-based supports for early literacy through regular communications with parents*. Communicating to parents through newsletters or notes suggesting shared book reading and encouraging parents to observe and participate in classroom-based activities. Sharing information about the child's interests and skills during parent-child conferences.	3.65 (1.00-5.00)	3.93 (1.00-5.00)	4.00 (1.00-5.00)	3.75 (2.00-5.00)	3.82 (1.00-5.00)	4.08 (2.00-5.00)
15. *Special activities and supports to involve parents in supporting children's literacy development*. Offering a variety of activities providing information and guidance to parents about supports for children's literacy development (public library/adult family literacy services).	3.00 (1.00-5.00)	3.30 (1.00-5.00)	3.65 (1.00-5.00)	3.18 (1.00-5.00)	3.37 (1.00-5.00)	3.78 (1.00-5.00)
20. *Promoting the maintenance and development of children's native language*. Using several strategies to promote maintenance of children's native language including: print, songs, activities, as well as celebrating children's cultural backgrounds and encouraging native development at home.	3.46 (1.00-5.00)	3.81 (1.00-5.00)	4.03 (1.00-5.00)	3.94 (1.00-5.00)	3.67 (1.00-5.00)	3.86 (1.00-5.00)
Total Overall Average	**3.82 (2.27-4.93)**	**3.93 (2.20-4.93)**	**4.09 (1.81-5.00)**	**3.76 (2.13-4.94)**	**3.75 (1.71-5.00)**	**3.91 (2.13-5.00)**

*These means reflect the following districts only: Camden, East Orange, Irvington, Jersey City, Long Branch, Newark, Paterson, and Phillipsburg

Table 4. PRISM item and overall scores by year.

PRISM Item	Mean 12-13* (range)	Mean 13-14 (range)	Mean 14-15 (range)
1. Materials for counting, comparing, estimating, and recognizing number symbols. Classroom has collections of objects easy to count and contains many objects with numbers. Materials are arranged for easy access.	5.64 (1.00-7.00)	5.92 (1.00-7.00)	6.40 (1.00-7.00)
2. Materials for geometry and spatial positions/relations. Objects to arrange and art/pictorial materials support awareness of spatial concepts. Labels facilitate knowledge of position/locations of certain items.	5.72 (1.00-7.00)	5.56 (1.00-7.00)	5.91 (1.00-7.00)
3. Instruments for measuring and comparing amount: volume, weight, length, height, distance, area. Varied materials for comparing amounts (materials to fill/empty, scales for weighing, rulers and inch cubes for measuring) arranged in a logical order encouraging exploration.	4.93 (1.00-7.00)	4.81 (1.00-7.00)	5.36 (1.00-7.00)
4. Materials for classifying and seriating. Various materials available in graduated sizes and attributes promoting classification and seriation.	5.21 (1.00-7.00)	5.03 (1.00-7.00)	5.49 (2.00-7.00)
5. Materials for science explorations. Observation tools and examples of natural and human-made objects that invite close observation, comparison, and /or sorting accessible and arranged in a logical way.	4.77 (1.00-7.00)	4.38 (1.00-7.00)	4.82 (1.00-7.00)
6. Materials to support reading and writing about and representing science concepts. Materials such as books, posters, or computer programs that cover biological and non-biological content are accessible and arranged in a logical way that invites in-depth exploration.	4.84 (1.00-7.00)	4.44 (1.00-7.00)	4.78 (1.00-7.00)
7. Counting for a purpose. Methods and activities for counting/numbers are enjoyable and relevant. Opportunities to count are provided throughout the day during routines and free play.	4.58 (1.00-7.00)	4.89 (1.00-7.00)	4.83 (1.00-7.00)
8. Identifying and writing numerals and numerical symbols. Teachers encourage children to identify and write numerals or numerical symbols in varying circumstances and throughout the day for a purpose.	2.36 (1.00-7.00)	2.52 (1.00-7.00)	2.70 (1.00-7.00)
9. Numerical Operations. Teachers encourage children to compare numerals and quantities in a functional way throughout the day.	2.74 (1.00-7.00)	2.63 (1.00-7.00)	2.71 (1.00-7.00)
10. Identifying and using geometric shapes. Teachers provide opportunities for children to identify and manipulate 2- or 3-dimensional shapes, and discuss concepts of geometry using mathematical vocabulary.	2.56 (1.00-7.00)	2.27 (1.00-7.00)	2.39 (1.00-7.00)
11. Spatial positions/relationships. Staff encourage children to explore spatial concepts and relations, using mathematical vocabulary.	2.98 (1.00-7.00)	2.74 (1.00-7.00)	2.60 (1.00-7.00)
12. Measuring and comparing: length, height, distance, area, volume, weight, and time. Teachers provide opportunities to measure objects and compare two or more things in a variety of meaningful contexts throughout the day.	2.20 (1.00-7.00)	2.37 (1.00-7.00)	2.38 (1.00-7.00)
13. Classifying, seriating, and patterning. Staff encourage children to identify attributes of objects, and incorporate concepts of classification and seriation in an intentional way during the day.	2.68 (1.00-7.00)	2.43 (1.00-7.00)	2.52 (1.00-7.00)
14. Science explorations, experiments, and discussions. There is classroom-based evidence of planned and spontaneous science experiences and interactions for children.	3.45 (1.00-7.00)	2.43 (1.00-7.00)	2.63 (1.00-7.00)
15. Observing and predicting. Staff encourage children to use language to make observations about objects that are and are not physically present, and to compare and contrast attributes of objects or events.	2.68 (1.00-7.00)	1.78 (1.00-7.00)	2.16 (1.00-7.00)
16. Recording science information. Staff plan activities in which children represent specific science content, and they document and review recorded information with children during or after discussions.	2.48 (1.00-7.00)	1.94 (1.00-7.00)	2.37 (1.00-7.00)
Total Overall Average	**3.74 (1.63-6.38)**	**3.51 (1.00-6.13)**	**3.75 (1.38-6.81)**

*These means reflect the following districts only: Camden, East Orange, Irvington, Jersey City, Long Branch, Newark, Paterson, and Phillipsburg

Table 5.1. Average scores by ECERS-3 subscale and overall. (N=293 classrooms)

ECERS-3 Subscale	Mean 2015-16	Minimum 2015-16	Maximum 2015-16
Space and Furnishings This subscale addresses the areas of indoor and outdoor space, room arrangement, organization, display, furnishings and equipment.	**4.43**	2.14	7.00
Personal Care Routines This subscale addresses practices around daily routines such as meals and toileting as well as health and safety practices.	**4.36**	1.25	7.00
Language and Literacy This area addresses the classroom's formal and informal communication, language and vocabulary expansion opportunities, and use of books and attention to print.	**4.86**	1.60	7.00
Learning Activities This subscale looks at the learning opportunities in each of the areas of the classroom including fine motor, art, music/movement, blocks, sand/water, dramatic play, nature/science, math/number materials and activities, use of technology, and diversity.	**4.22**	1.18	6.80
Interaction This area addresses supervision of children, discipline, staff-child interactions, individualized teaching and learning, and interactions among children.	**5.26**	1.00	7.00
Program Structure This area addresses classroom operations and schedule, including groupings, transitions and flexibility.	**5.20**	1.00	7.00
Overall Average Score	**4.61**	1.63	6.66

Table 5.2. Average scores by ECERS-3 item. (N= 293 classrooms)

| ECERS-3 Item	Mean 2015-16	Minimum 2015-16	Maximum 2015-16
1. Indoor space	4.78	1.00	7.00
2. Furniture for routine care	4.67	1.00	7.00
3. Room arrangement	4.86	2.00	7.00
4. Space for privacy	5.11	1.00	7.00
5. Child-related display	4.84	1.00	7.00
6. Space for gross motor	3.17	1.00	7.00
7. Gross motor equipment	3.60	1.00	7.00
8. Meals/snacks	4.28	1.00	7.00
9. Toileting/diapering	3.98	1.00	7.00
10. Health practices	3.98	1.00	7.00
11. Safety practices	5.19	1.00	7.00
12. Helping children expand vocabulary	4.69	1.00	7.00
13. Encouraging children to use language	5.25	1.00	7.00
14. Staff use of books with children	4.56	1.00	7.00
15. Encouraging children's use of books	4.93	1.00	7.00
16. Becoming familiar with print	4.86	1.00	7.00
17. Fine motor	4.87	1.00	7.00
18. Art	4.69	1.00	7.00
19. Music and movement	3.89	1.00	7.00
20. Blocks	3.86	1.00	7.00
21. Dramatic play	4.59	1.00	7.00
22. Nature/science	3.98	1.00	7.00
23. Math materials and activities	3.77	1.00	7.00
24. Math in daily events	4.34	1.00	7.00
25. Understanding written numbers	3.46	1.00	7.00
26. Promoting acceptance of diversity	5.01	1.00	7.00
27. Appropriate uses of technology	3.80	1.00	7.00
28. Supervision of gross motor	4.55	1.00	7.00
29. Individualized teaching and learning	5.70	1.00	7.00
30. Staff-child interaction	5.62	1.00	7.00
31. Peer interaction	5.16	1.00	7.00
32. Discipline	5.28	1.00	7.00
33. Transitions and wait times	5.34	1.00	7.00
34. Free play	5.29	1.00	7.00
35. Whole group activities	4.98	1.00	7.00

Several figures are presented below to provide visuals of trends by subscale and auspice. Figure 2.1 below illustrates the average scores by subscale for the 2015-2016 school year. As is shown, average scores were between 4.0 and 5.0 on four subscales and overall. Two subscales (*Interaction* and *Program Structure*) averaged above a 5.0. The *Learning Activities* subscale was the lowest scoring subscale (4.22), largely due to the 1-hour time requirement for children's access to materials. The *Personal Care Routines* subscale was the second lowest scoring subscale, mainly due to the hand washing requirements in the ECERS-3. This is similar to previous trends that were found on the ECERS-R. These trends can be better understood by looking at Table 5.2 above which reports item level averages.

Figure 2.1. Statewide ECERS-3 subscale scores.
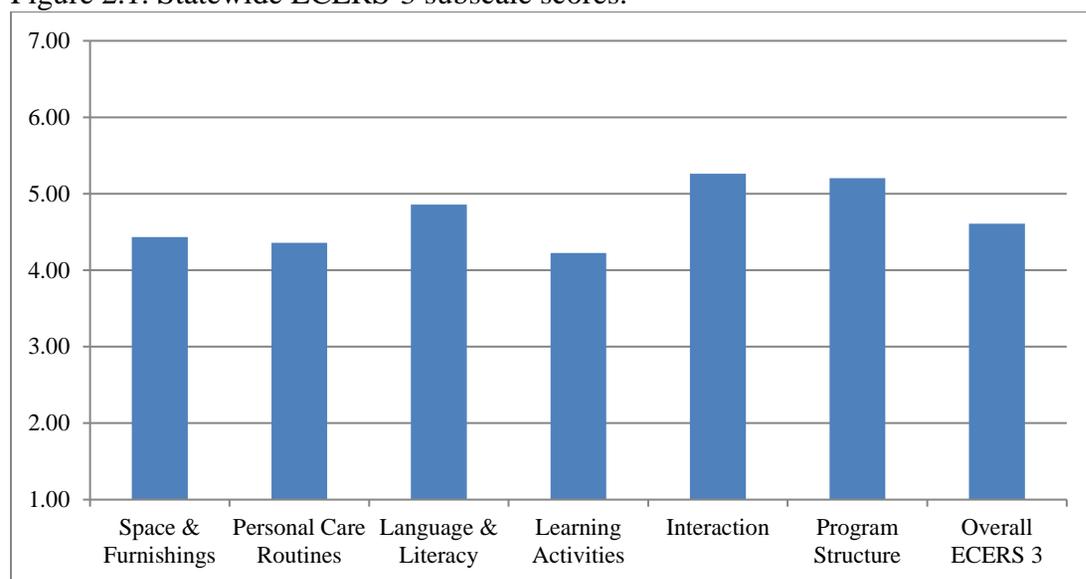
To further illustrate patterns across subscales, Figure 2.2 below shows the percentage of classrooms across the statewide sample scoring low (1.00-3.99), medium (4.00-5.99) and high (6.00-7.00). This figure shows how most classrooms score in the medium to high range on each subscale and overall. The *Interaction* subscale contains the highest percentage of scores in the high range, with 39.6% of the sample scoring high. Figure 2.2 also shows that the *Learning Activities* subscale has the most classrooms scoring in the low range (42%), in comparison to the other subscales.

Figure 2.2. Distribution of classrooms scoring low (1.00-3.99), medium (4.00-5.99) and high (6.00-7.00) in 2016.
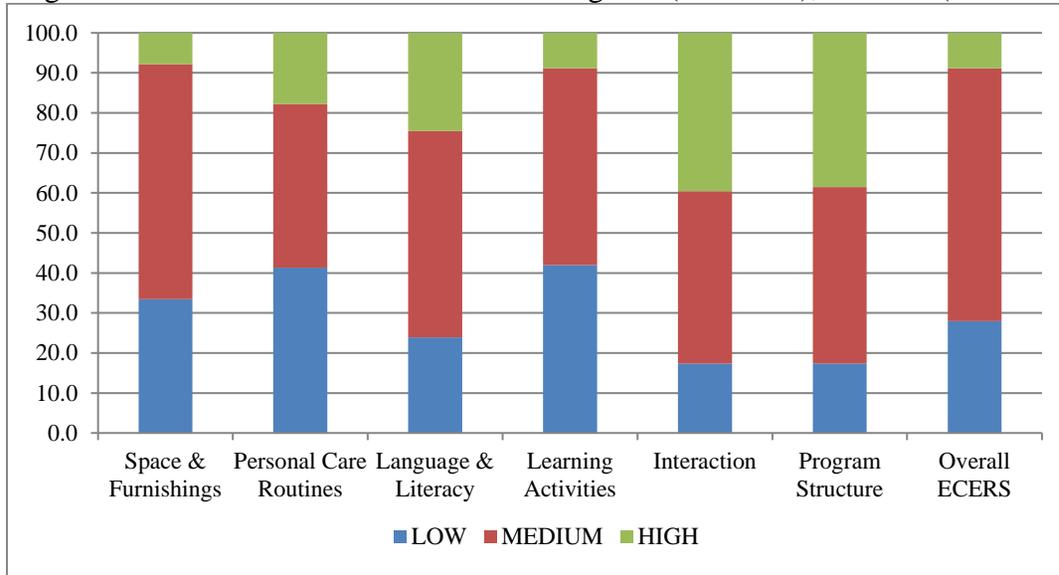
The following figures (Figures 2.3-2.6) illustrate the same percentages separately by auspice. In general, the scoring patterns are similar regardless of auspice.

Figure 2.3. Distribution of Provider classrooms scoring low (1.00-3.99), medium (4.00-5.99) and high (6.00-7.00) in 2016.
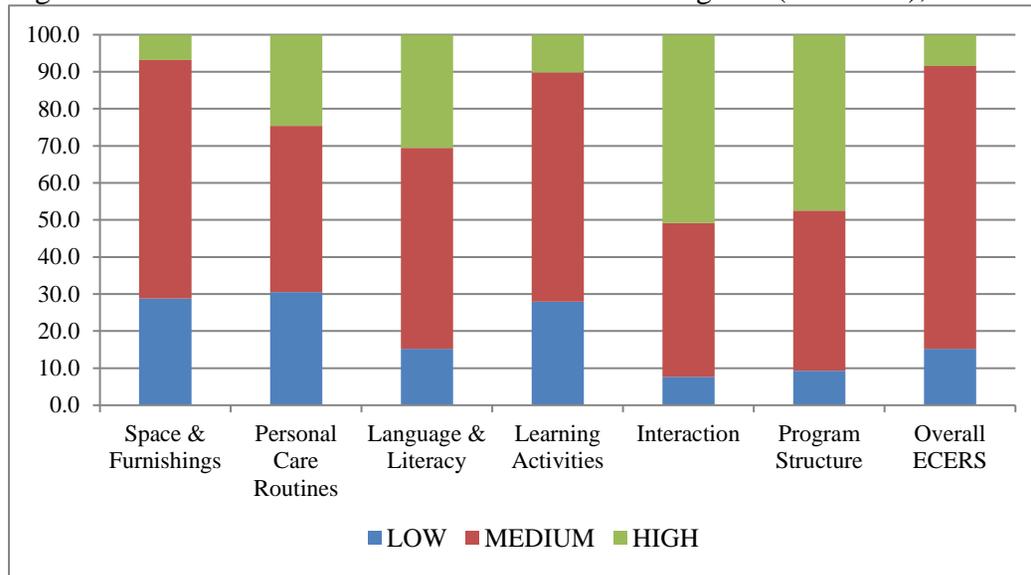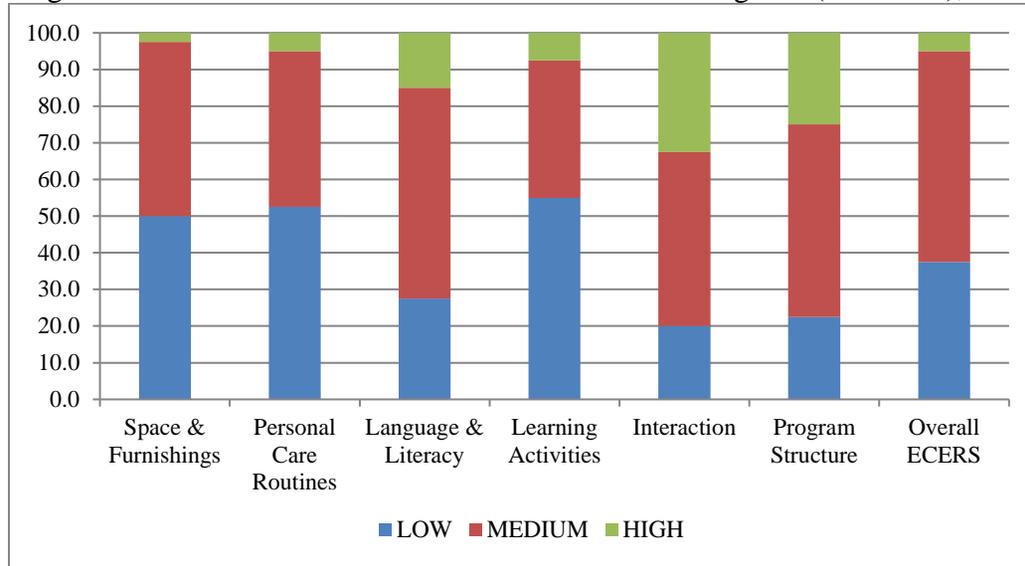
Figure 2.4. Distribution of Head Start classrooms scoring low (1.00-3.99), medium (4.00-5.99) and high (6.00-7.00) in 2016.
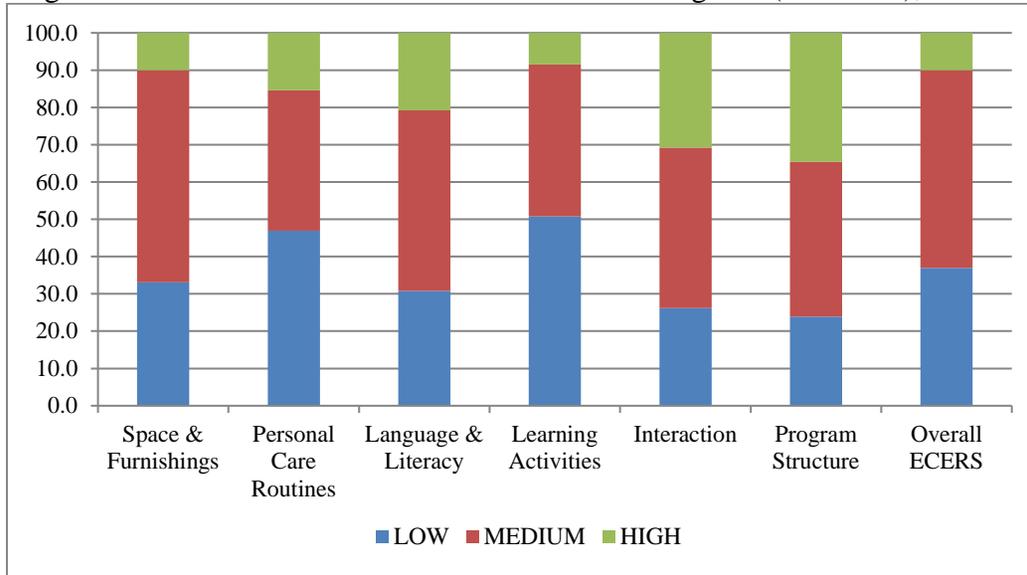
Figure 2.5. Distribution of District classrooms scoring low (1.00-3.99), medium (4.00-5.99) and high (6.00-7.00) in 2016.
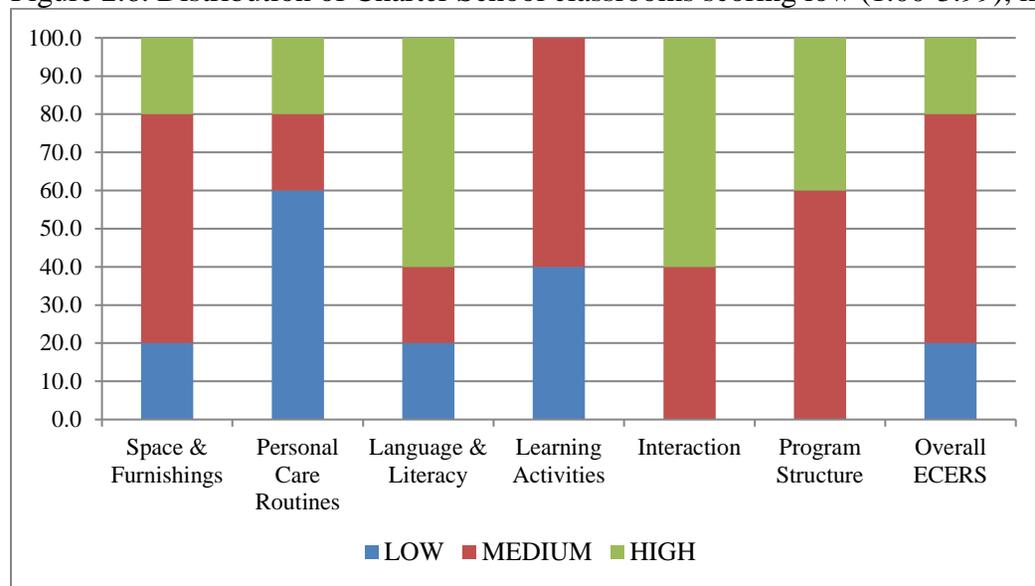
Figure 2.6. Distribution of Charter School classrooms scoring low (1.00-3.99), medium (4.00-5.99) and high (6.00-7.00) in 2016.

Discussion

ECERS-R Findings in Previous Years

Across the full sample of classrooms, scores on every subscale and overall improved over time. The overall ECERS-R score for the full sample in 2015 was 5.43, which is considered developmentally appropriate practice. The *Interactions* and *Parents and Staff* subscales scored highest, averaging above a 6.0. Items in the *Personal Care Routines* and *Activities* subscales continued to score the lowest, as has been the trend since the beginning of the quality study.

SELA Findings in Previous Years

Across the full sample, overall SELA scores also improved over, averaging just under a score of 4.0 in 2015. Provider programs scored highest, followed by district programs and then Head Start programs. Scores on each item were nearly identical to those from 2014. Further, by 2015, there were no areas of the SELA that scored below a 3, indicating that literacy practices across the board were considered at least "fair" and often good quality in every area.

PRISM Findings in Previous Years

By 2015, provisions for math materials across the full sample of classrooms were high quality. Provisions for science materials were not as strong as there were less features evident in the classrooms observed. Results for science and math-based interactions show that teachers engage in counting for a purpose with children to a moderate degree, but other practices, such as identifying numerals or numerical operations were not as frequent. Science explorations, experiments, observations and activities also did not frequently occur in classrooms.

2015-2016 ECERS-3 Findings

The *Interaction* and *Program Structure* subscales scored highest, both averaging above a 5.0. Items in the *Personal Care Routines* and *Learning Activiti*es subscales scored the lowest (averaging 4.36 and 4.22, respectively), which has been the trend in previous studies using the ECERS-R. Even so, there was a wide range of scores in these areas. The minimum average for *Learning Activities* was 1.18 while the maximum average score was 6.80, indicating that some classrooms have high quality practices in these areas. Giving children access to materials for longer periods of time during the day would have large implications for scores in this subscale. Similarly, the minimum average for *Personal Care Routines* was 1.25 while the maximum average score was 7.00. Attending to practices such as hand washing and nap time sanitation practices would improve scores in this area.

There was a wide range of average scores on every subscale in this sample of classrooms. In every district there are classrooms that score in the "inadequate" range, as well as classrooms that score in the "excellent" range. This is a positive finding, indicating that with appropriate supports it is indeed possible to increase classroom quality in every district. Simply attending to specific criteria that is outlined in the ECERS-3, and sharing with teachers how to implement such criteria in their classrooms could improve practices over time.

Some subscales are easier than others to affect change quickly. For instance, *Space and Furnishings* could be improved quickly by providing information on room arrangement, child display, and time spent in gross motor activities. The same is true for the *Personal Care* and *Program Structure* subscales. Normalizing practices such as thorough hand washing and table sanitation procedures can bring *Personal Care* scores up quickly, while restructuring classroom schedules, allowing for ample free choice and outdoor time could quickly increase *Program Structure* scores. In contrast, scores in the *Language and Literacy, Learning Activities,* and *Interaction* subscales may take a bit more time to increase, as they require attention to more complex and individualized interactions between teachers and children.