MNPS-PRI Partnership Project Classroom Observation Report

Classroom Report
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PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPING MODEL EARLY LEARNING CENTERS

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Table of Contents

Description of Classroom Observation Measures 2
Observation Report Summary and Goals 6
Teacher-Specific Data:
Goal 1: Reducing Transitions 7
Goal 2: Increasing Quality of Instruction 9
Goal 3: Creating a More Positive Emotional Climate 10
Goal 4: Helping Teachers Learn to Listen to Children 13
Goal 5: Creating Opportunities for Sequential Activities 15
Goal 6: Fostering Associative/Cooperative Interactions 16
Goal 7: Fostering Higher Levels of Involvement 17
Goal 8: Creating More Math Opportunities for Children 18
Additional information: Teachers' Use of Time in the Classroom 19

Classroom Observation Measures

An observer visited each MNPS Pre-K hub classroom to note all instructional classroom activities during the day. The observer completed the Teacher Observation in Preschool (TOP) and the Child Observation in Preschool (COP). The classroom observation measures are described below.

Teacher Observation in Preschool (TOP)

The TOP is a system for observing the teacher and assistant's behaviors in preschools across a daylong visit. The TOP is based on a series of snapshots of the behaviors of both the teacher and assistant across a period of time when children and teachers are in the room. Each snapshot may be, by itself, an unreliable piece of information, but collectively, they combine to provide a picture of how the teacher and assistant are spending their time in a classroom. The teacher's behavior is observed for a 3-second window before coding. Once coding has been completed for the teacher, the same procedure is followed for the assistant in the classroom. Teacher and assistant are coded at the beginning of a "sweep;" children are coded immediately afterward. At the end of an observation, a range of 18-24 sweeps each was collected on the teacher and the assistant. The TOP measures:

- The types of tasks in which the teacher or assistant is engaged.
    - Instruction
    - Management including administration, monitoring, and personal care
    - Behavior Approving or Disapproving
    - Social
    - None
- The level of ongoing instruction.
    - None, Low, Basic Skills, Some Inferential, and Highly Inferential
- The areas of learning on which the teacher or assistant focuses.
    - Math, literacy, science, social studies
    - Art, music, fine motor, drama, etc.
    - No Learning Focus: no instruction

- The tone of the interactions the teacher or assistant has with the class, coded on a 1-5 rating scale.
- How much and to whom the teacher talks and listens.
- Counts of Behavior Approving and Disapproving used by the teacher or assistant. These codes are marked each time a unique behavior approval or disapproval is given and are counted when an approval or disapproval is given to the same child or group of children about different behaviors or to different children for the same behavior.

TOP data were not collected when children were napping, in the gym, or outside on the playground. The TOP focuses on times when teachers and children could interact.

For More Information See: Bilbrey, C., Vorhaus, E., Farran, D. & Shufelt, S. (2007). *Teacher Observation in Preschools* (2017 revision). Peabody Research Institute, Nashville, TN.

Child Observation in Preschool (COP)

The COP is a system for observing children's behaviors in preschool across a daylong visit. The COP is based on a series of snapshots of children's behaviors during the day. Each snapshot may be, by itself, an unreliable piece of information, but collectively, they combine to provide a picture of how children are spending their time (as an aggregate), as well as information about individual differences among children in their activity preferences. A specific child is observed during a 3-second window and then coded across 9 dimensions before the observer moves to the next child. At the end of an observation, a range of 18-24 sweeps was collected on each child in the classroom. The COP measures:

- The different types of tasks in which children are participating.
    - Passive Instruction
    - Non-sequential
    - Sequential
    - Social
    - Routines/Waiting
    - Other: disruptive, time out, none
- The different types of interactions in which children are participating.
    - Alone
    - Parallel
    - Associative or Cooperative
    - Onlooking
    - Social
    - Other: Unoccupied, Timeout, Non-Academic
- The different types of learning foci of the activities in which children are participating.
    - Math, Literacy, Science, Social Studies
    - Art, Music, Fine Motor, Drama
    - Toys and games
    - No Learning Focus

- The children's level of involvement during learning activities, coded on a 1-5 rating scale.
- How much and to whom the children talk and listen.

As with the TOP, COP codes were not collected when children were napping, in the gym, or on the playground. COP codes are only collected when learning interactions could take place.

For More Information See: Farran, D. et al. (2006). *Child Observation in Preschools* (2017 revision). Peabody Research Institute, Nashville, TN.

Observation Report Summary and Goals

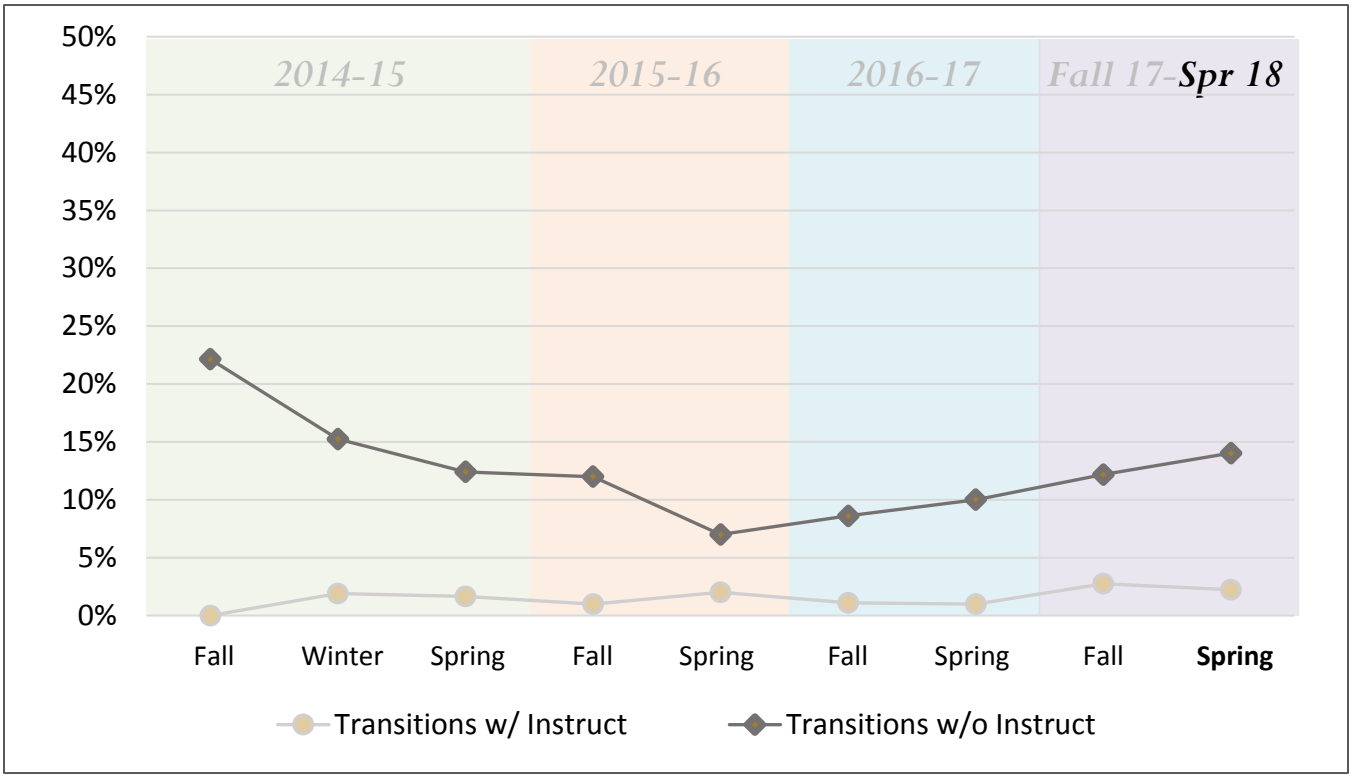
The goal of this report is to provide the MNPS Early Learning Center teachers a collective overview of their classrooms' observations, structured around 8 goals (below) which were found to be associated with academic gains over the course of the first and second years of the MNPS-PRI Partnership Project (2014-15 and 2015-16). This report contains your classroom observation data gathered since the inception of the project until now. Teachers who joined the project after 2014-15 or 2015-16 will not see any data in those spaces on the graphs. Teachers who joined the project in 2017-18 will see the averages for their Early Learning Center in the spaces for prior years.

1. Reducing Transitions
2. Increasing Quality of Instruction
3. Creating More Positive Emotional Climate
4. Helping Teachers Learn to Listen to Children
5. Creating More Opportunities for Sequential Activities
6. Fostering Associative/Cooperative Interactions
7. Fostering Higher Levels of Involvement by Children
8. Creating More Math Opportunities for Children

GOAL 1: Reducing Transitions

In classroom observations, Transitions are coded when one learning activity has ended and the next has not yet begun.

Percentage of the Day Spent in Transitions

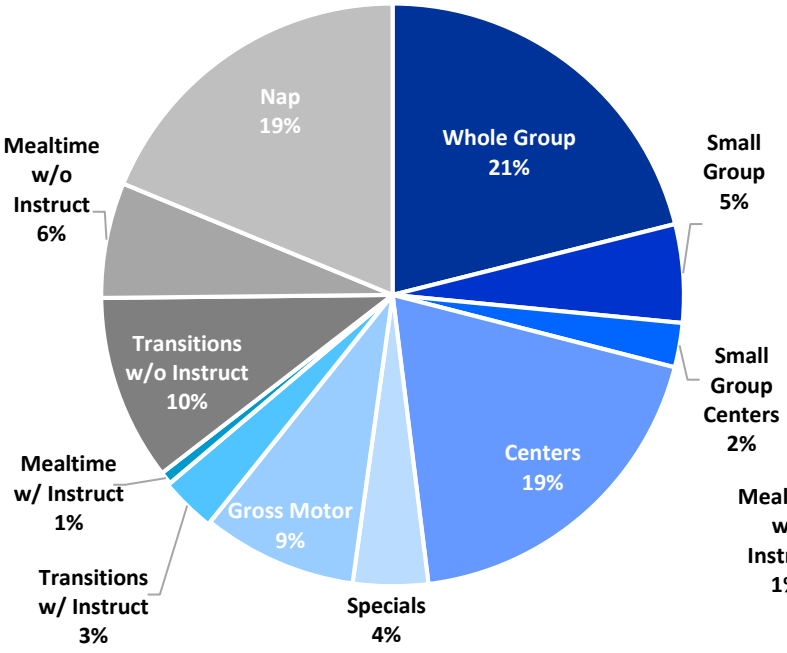


Typically, during transitions children are not engaged and may be missing out on learning opportunities. However, it is possible to add instruction to Transitions to increase students' learning. This can be achieved using multiple strategies, such as engaging groups of children in conversations using open-ended questions, initiating a song/chant, or asking children to reflect on the last activity.

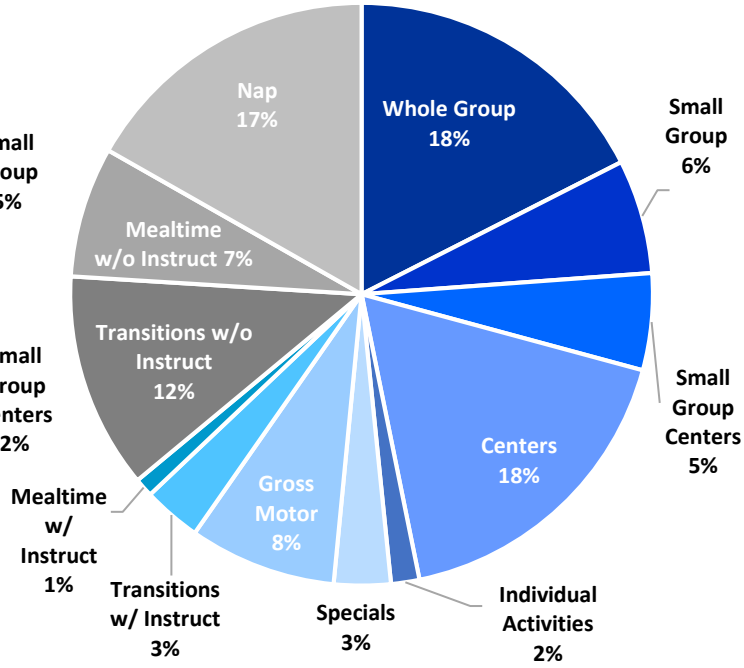
*Beginning Fall 2017, the percentages of the day children spent in a given activity were calculated based on the time between sweeps from COP. Thus, **transitions with instruction** and **meal with instruction** are comprised of the length of sweeps in which each child is focusing on academic content during a transition or a meal rather than 75% of children receiving instruction during a transition or meal

Percentage of the Day Children were Involved in Various Classroom Activities

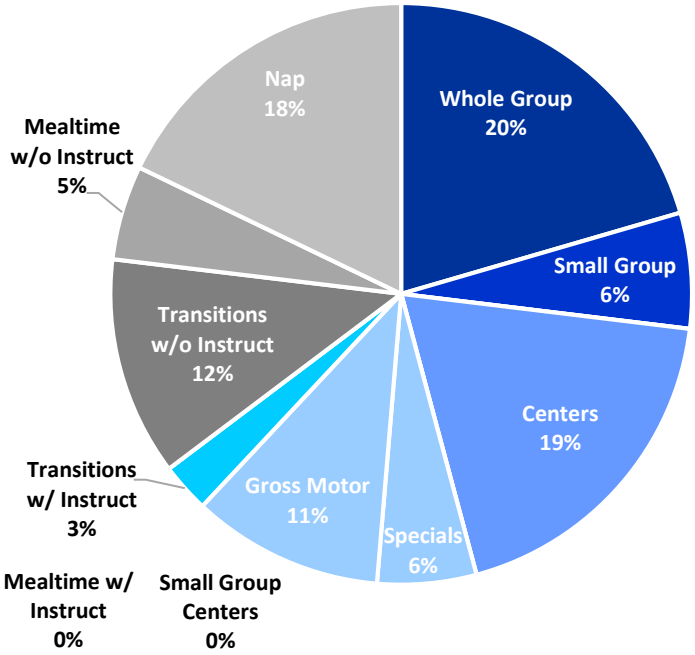
Across ELCs (22 Classrooms) Fall 2017 Averages



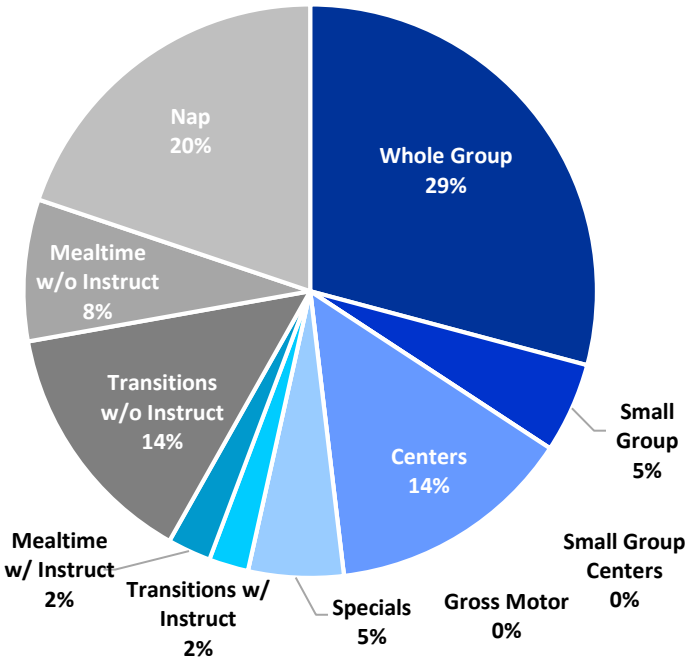
Across ELCs (22 Classrooms) Spring 2018 Averages



Sunshine Fall 2017 Averages



Sunshine Spring 2018 Averages

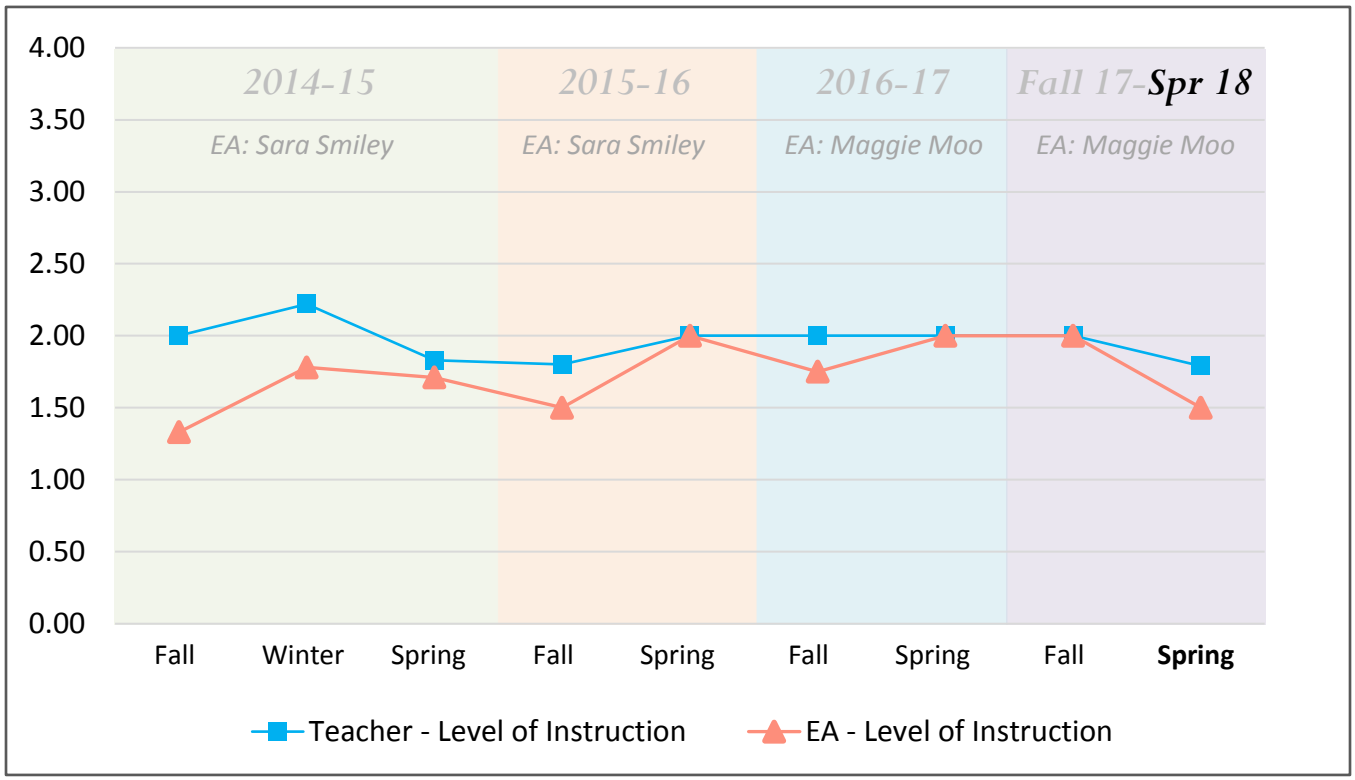


GOAL 2: Increasing Quality of Instruction

In classroom observations, we code the Level of Instruction using a 0 - 4 scale:

- 0 - None
- 1 - Low level of Instruction
- 2 - Basic Skill Instruction
- 3 - Some Inferential Learning (e.g., teacher uses open-ended questions that have more than one possible answer to elicit active student participation)
- 4 - High Inferential Learning (e.g., interaction and discussion, in which children engage in turn-taking conversations involving at least one inferential question; may involve connections to the child's world/experiences)

Average Level of Instruction Observed in Classroom



Note: Ratings were only obtained during periods when the Teacher and EA were observed instructing (compared to other classroom duties). **Please see Pages 19 - 21 for graphs with information on time spent instructing.**

GOAL 3: Creating a More Positive Emotional Climate

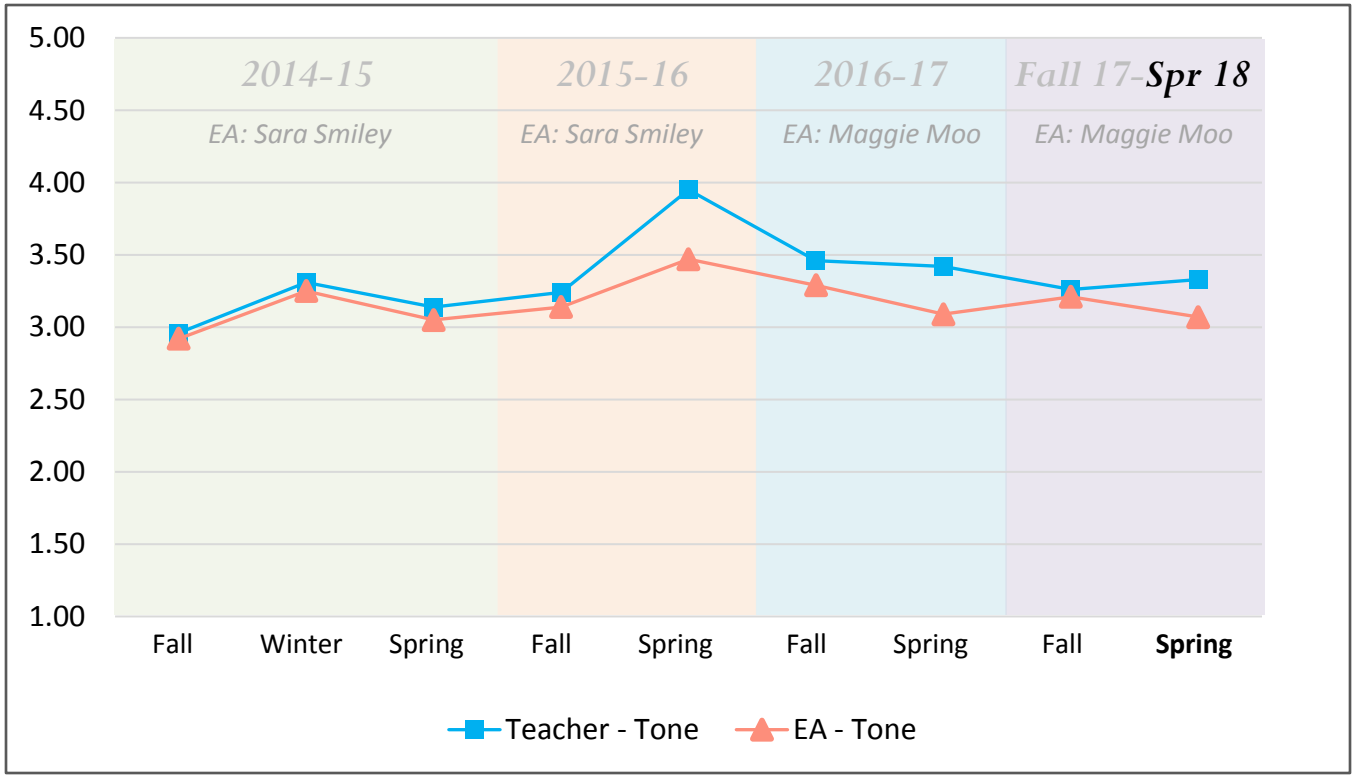
To capture the emotional climate of the classroom, observers look for the teacher's overall Tone with children and how often teachers use Behavior Approval and Behavior Disapproval.

Tone/Affect

The Tone reflects the positive or negative feel of the classroom and the interaction of the teacher/assistant with the children, and is coded on a scale of 1 to 5:

- 1 - Extreme Negative
- 2 - Negative
- 3 - Flat
- 4 - Pleasant
- 5 - Vibrant

Average Teacher Tone Observed in Classroom

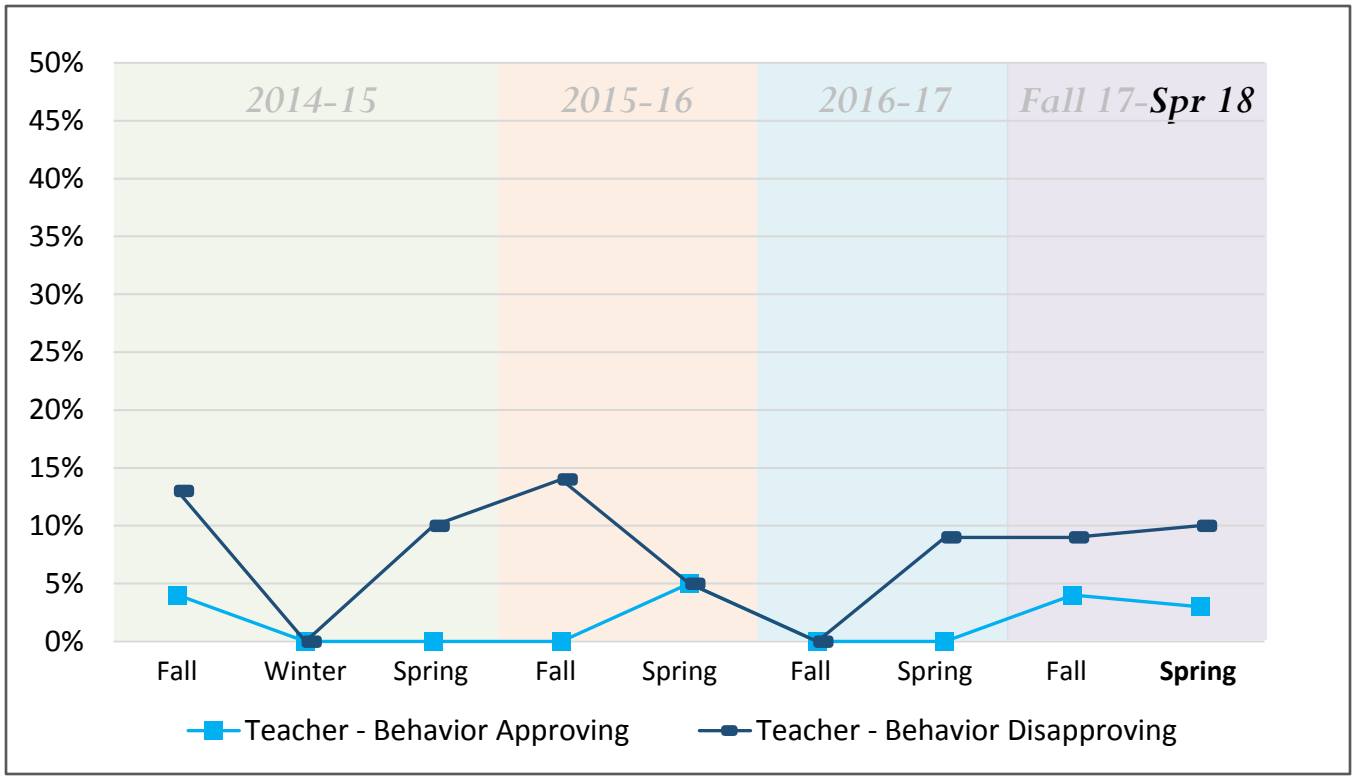


Behavior Approval and Disapproval

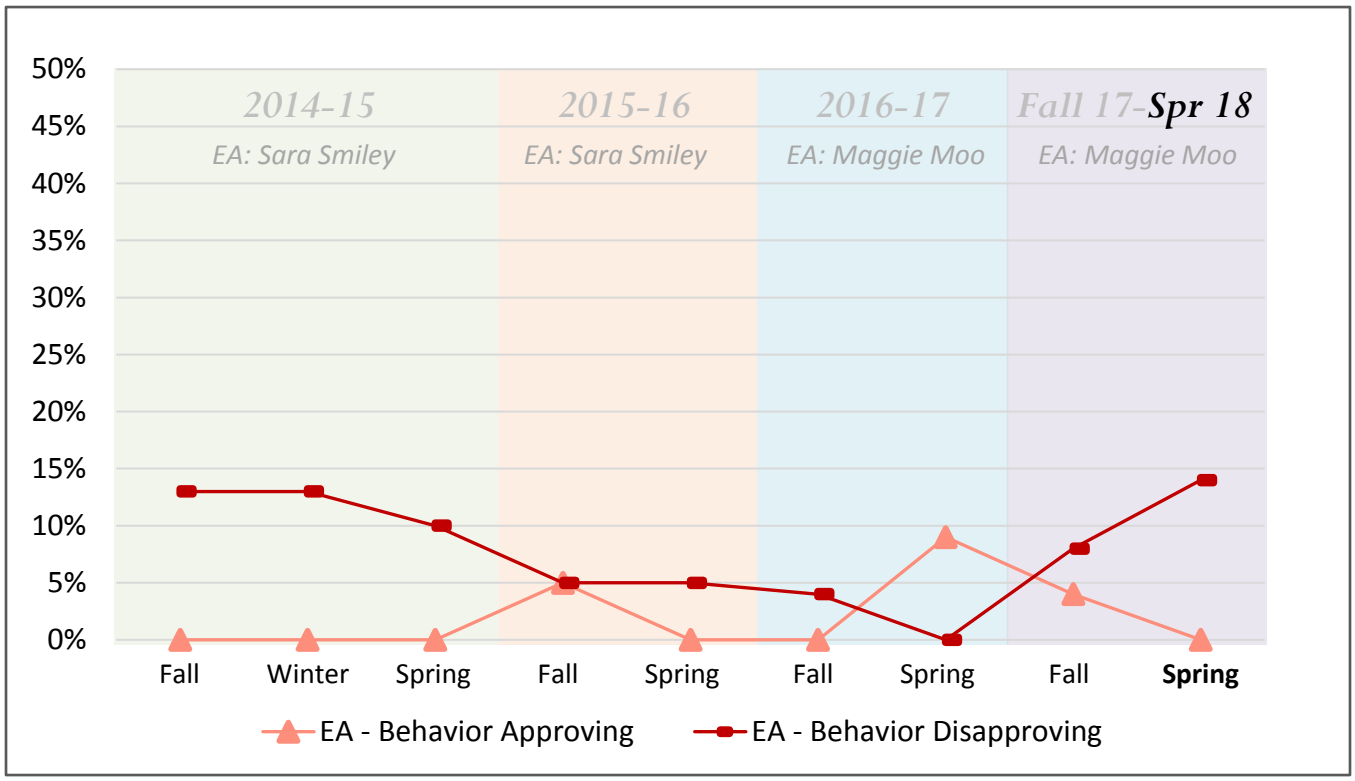
- **Behavior Approval:**
  Teacher/assistant uses approving verbal comments, facial expressions, or physical contact with the children.

- **Behavior Disapproval:**
  Teacher/assistant uses disapproving facial expressions, verbal comments, tone of voice, and/or physical contact with children.

Percentage of Sweeps Teacher was Observed
Engaging in Behavior Approving and Disapproving



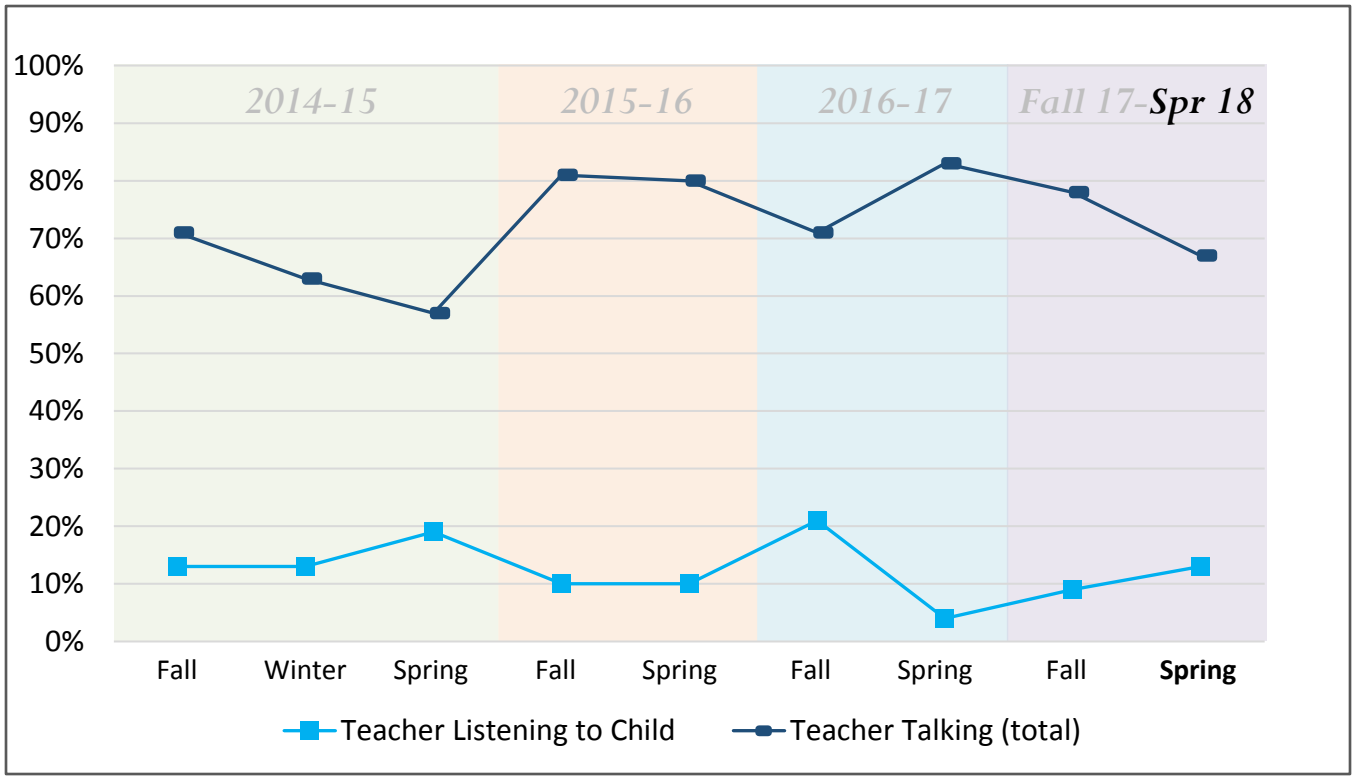
Percentage of Sweeps EA was Observed Engaging in Behavior Approving and Disapproving



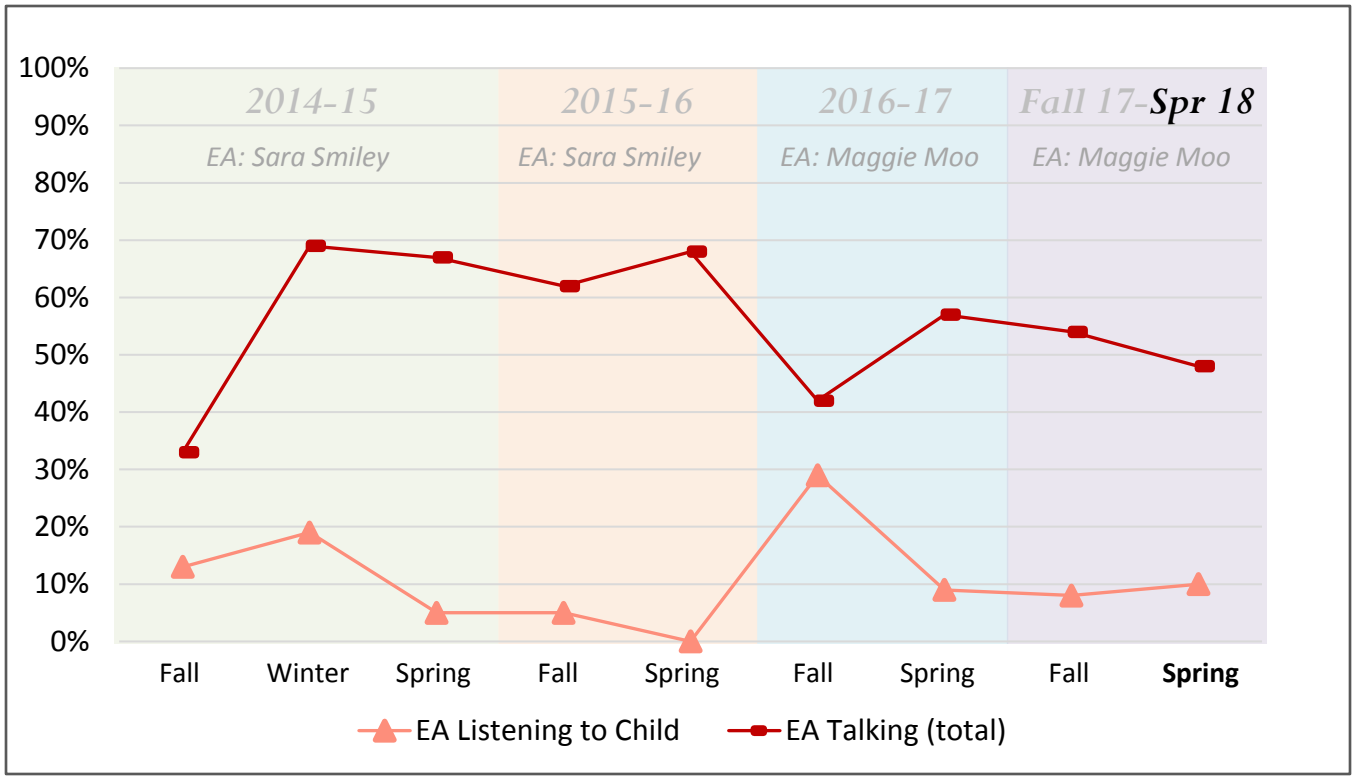
GOAL 4: Helping Teachers Learn to Listen to Children

One way to get children engaged in learning opportunities is to get them talking. Teachers can facilitate child talk by asking them open-ended questions, and encouraging associative and cooperative interactions among students. Observers code when teachers and children Listen (and to whom) and when teachers and children Talk (and to whom).

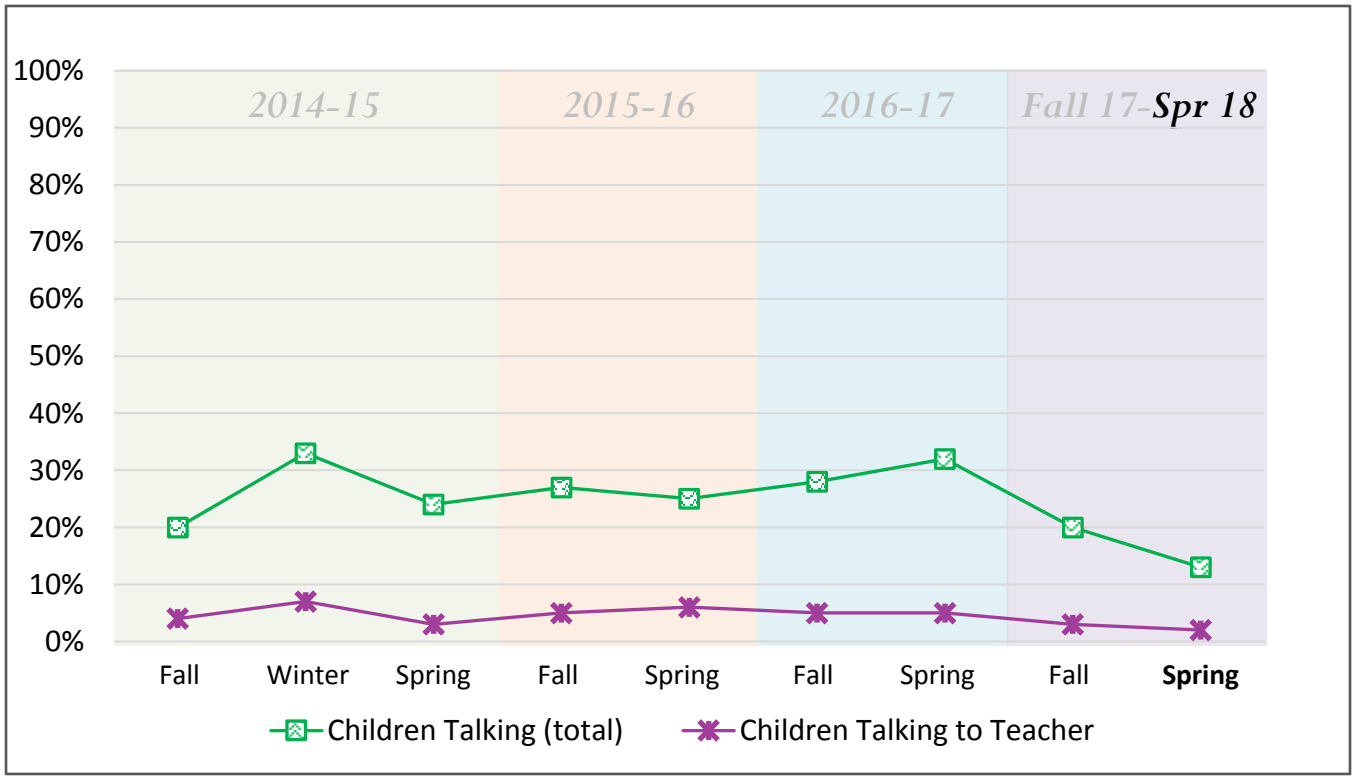
Percentage of Sweeps Teacher was Observed
Listening and Talking (and to whom)



Percentage of Sweeps Assistant Teacher was Observed Listening and Talking (and to whom)



Percentage of Sweeps Children were Observed Talking (and to whom)



GOAL 5: Creating Opportunities for Sequential Activities

Children need to interact with materials and engage in planful activities that promote their learning. When children participate in sequential activities, they can engage in higher-level thinking—reflecting on the activity and planning what to do next. When setting up the classroom and choosing materials, teachers can create opportunities to promote this level of cognition throughout the day, and especially during center time.

Sequential vs. Non-Sequential

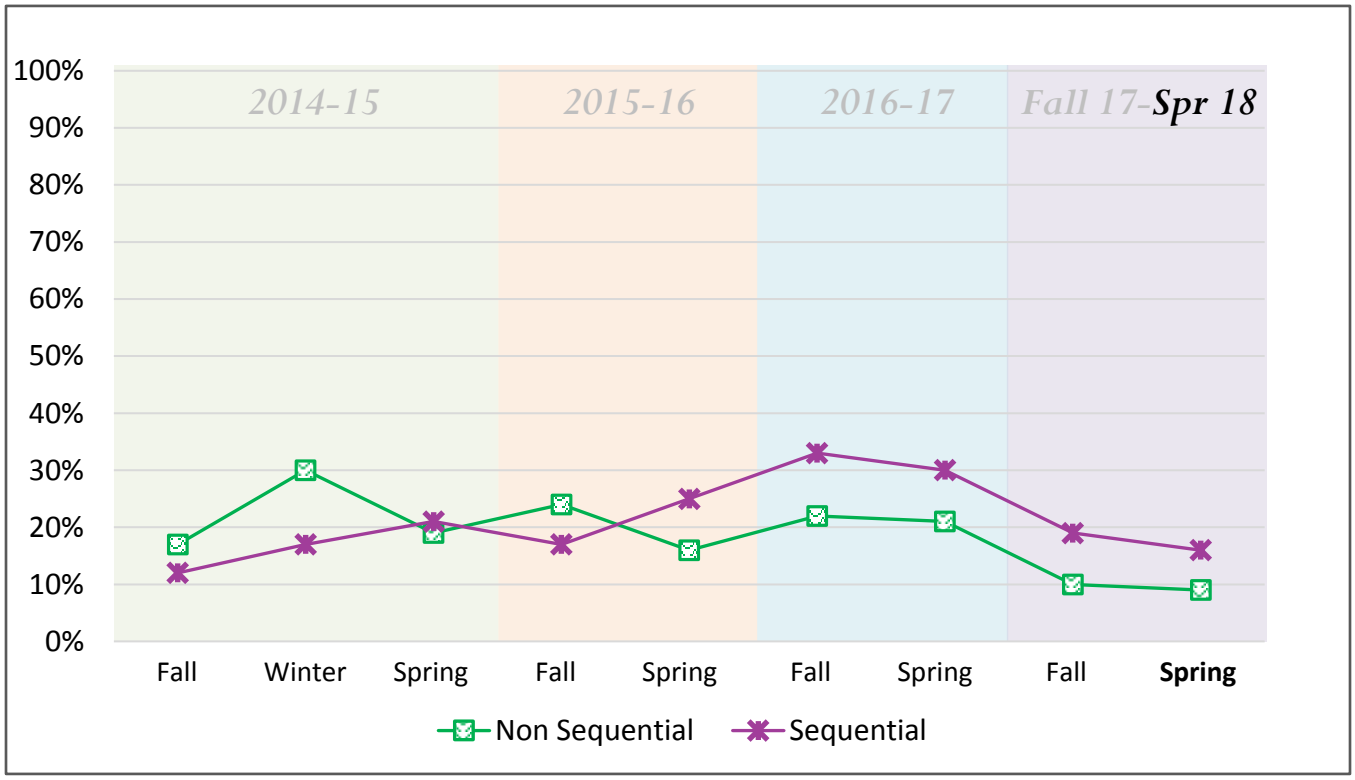
Sequential: Child is involved with activities or materials that involve a sequence of steps.

- Examples: Conducting a science experiment, working a puzzle, writing a story

Non-Sequential: Child is involved with activities or materials but not following a predetermined set of steps.

- Examples: Doodling on paper, pushing trucks around on the rug, browsing through books

Percentage of Sweeps Children were Observed in Sequential and Non-Sequential Activities (EXCLUSIVE of Meal and Nap)

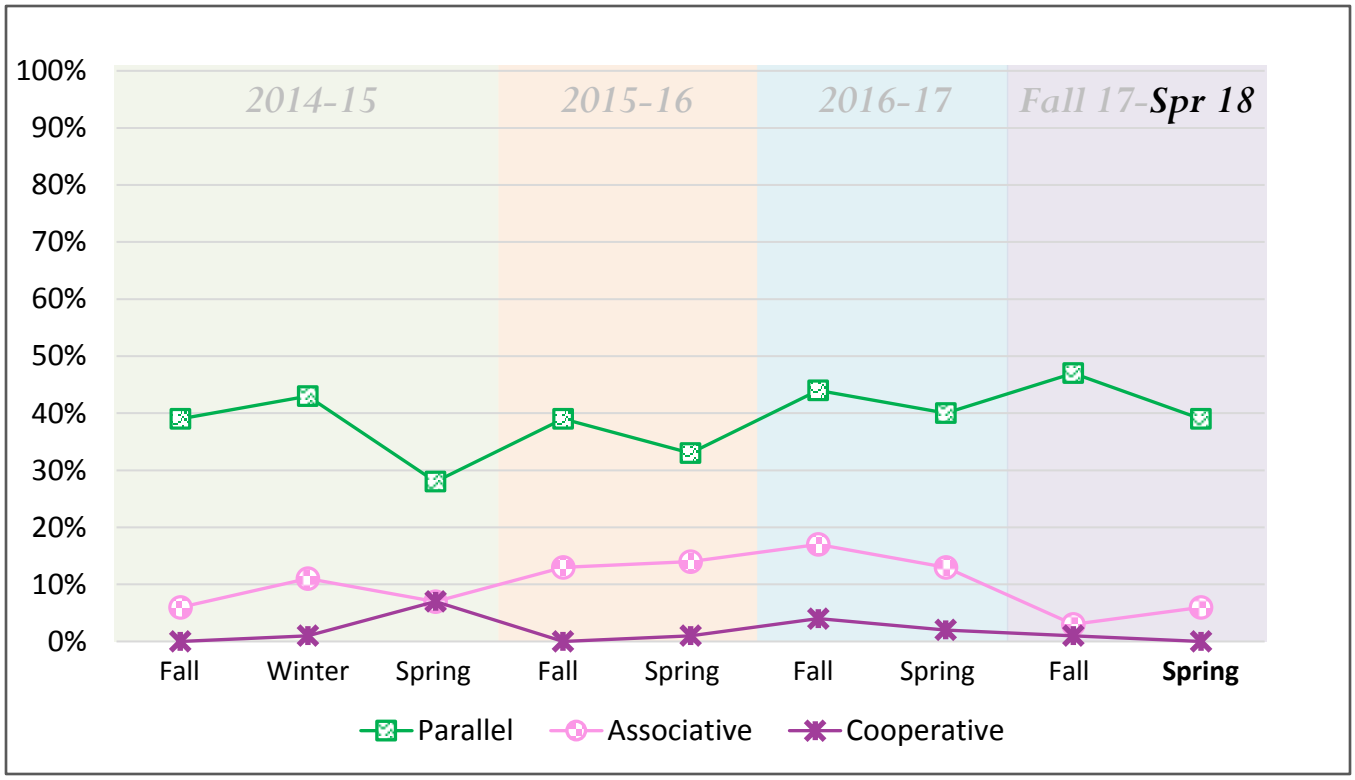


GOAL 6: Fostering Associative/Cooperative Interactions

During parallel play, children may work with similar materials but without interacting with others in the classroom. Associative and cooperative interactions occur when children are sharing materials *and* interacting to co-create something.

While associative interactions are often open-ended, cooperative play involves children working together with shared goals, rules, and/or organization. Both associative and cooperative play require children to communicate and work with peers. They also require children to monitor their own behavior and adapt to the needs and expectations of the group to accomplish a certain task. Thus, associative and cooperative play can have positive effects on children's language development, self-regulation development, and their level of involvement in classroom activities.

Percentage of Sweeps Children were Observed in Various Interaction Types
(EXCLUSIVE of Meal and Nap)



GOAL 7: Fostering Higher Levels of Involvement

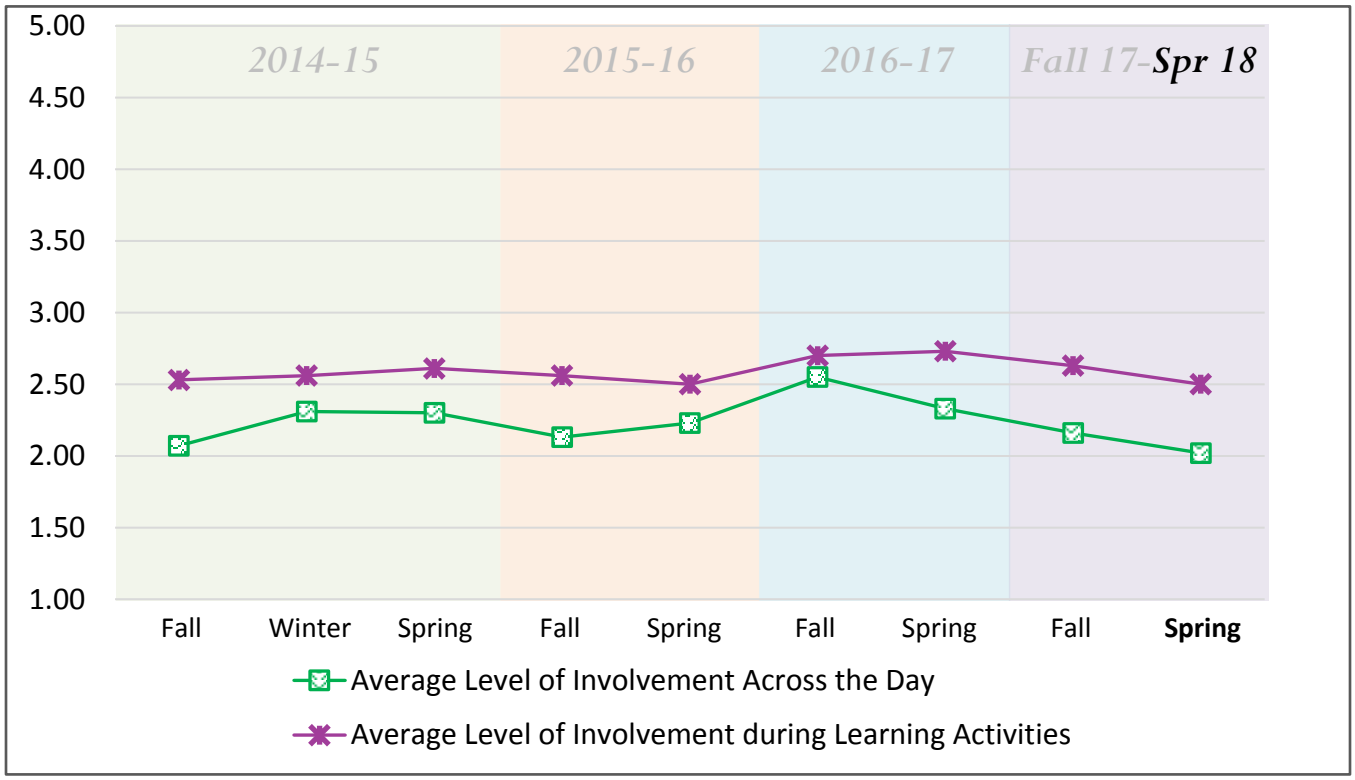
It is critical to get children involved in learning interactions in the classroom. Children who are not engaged, or who are only receiving information in a passive way are not getting the full advantage of their exposure to the content that will prepare them to enter Kindergarten.

Observers code children's involvement on a 5-point scale, from Low to High. This enables us to better understand which activities are drawing the highest levels of involvement, and in which activities children tend to show lower involvement.

- 1 - Low
- 2 - Medium Low
- 3 - Medium
- 4 - Medium High
- 5 - High

The graph below shows an overall Involvement rating from all activities throughout the day. If you wish to see a break out of Involvement ratings by activity type, we can provide that for you.

Involvement Ratings across the Day (EXCLUSIVE of Meal and Nap)

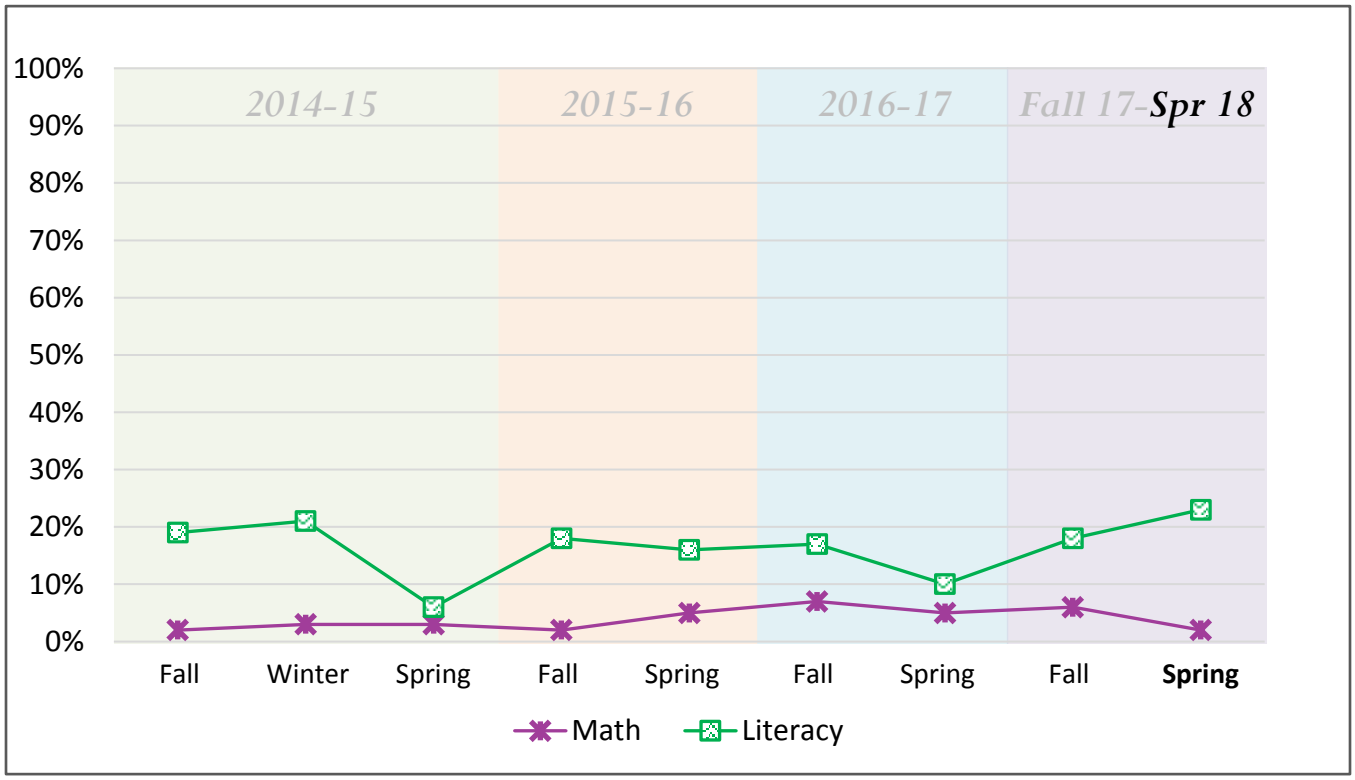


GOAL 8: Creating more Math Opportunities for Children

Children's early math exposure and knowledge are associated with long-term academic achievement in all areas, not just math. Thus, the more time children get to spend in activities designed to help them grasp mathematical concepts while they are in PreK, the better prepared they will be for kindergarten and beyond.

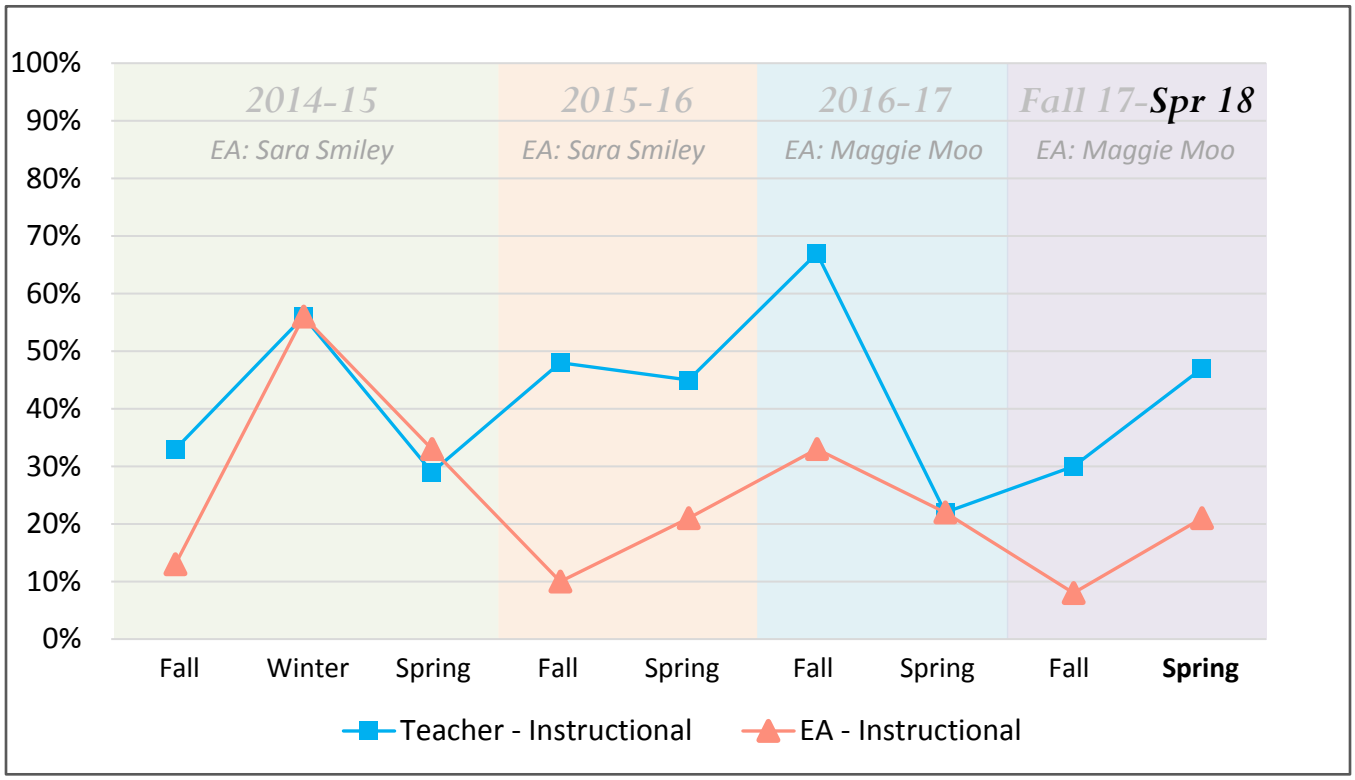
Literacy includes Reading, Code Based Instruction, and Emergent Literacy activities.

Percentage of Sweeps Children were Observed Engaging in Math and Literacy



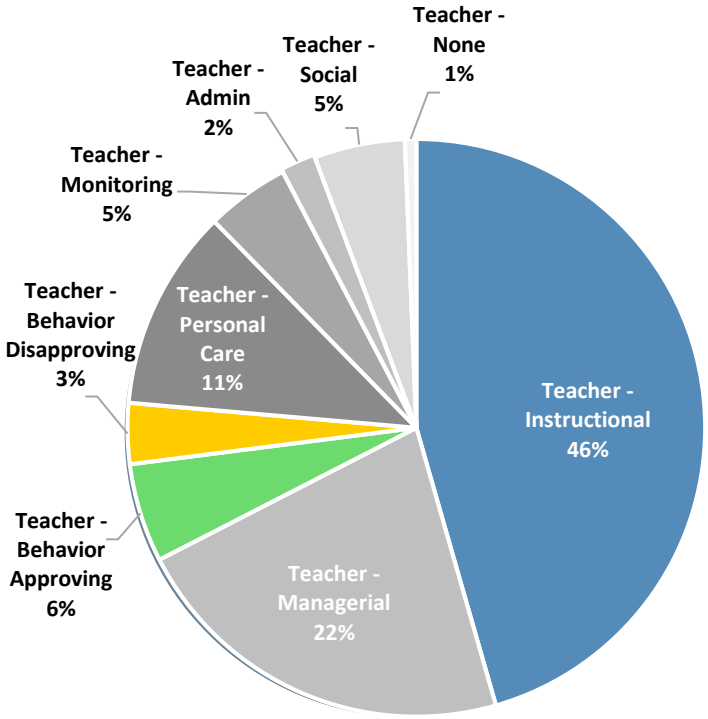
Additional Information: Teachers' Use of Time

Percentage of Sweeps Teachers and Assistants were Observed in Instructional Tasks
(Exclusive of Meal and Nap)

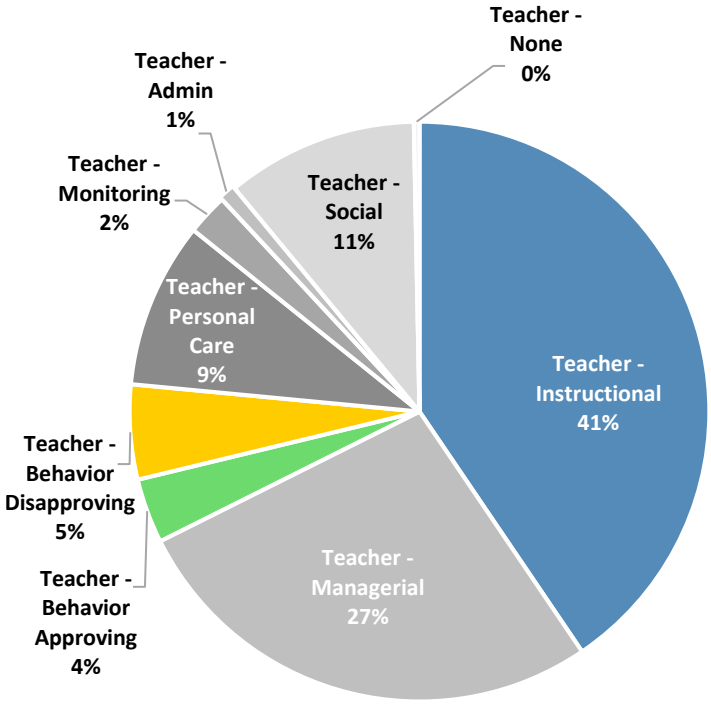


Percentage of Sweeps Teachers Observed in Various Type Tasks (Exclusive of Meal and Nap)

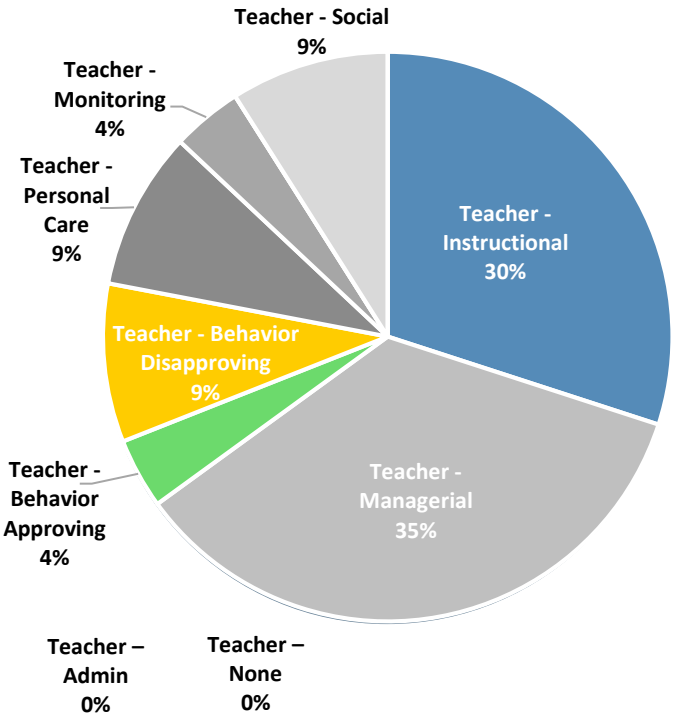
Across ELCs (22 Classrooms) Fall 2017 Averages



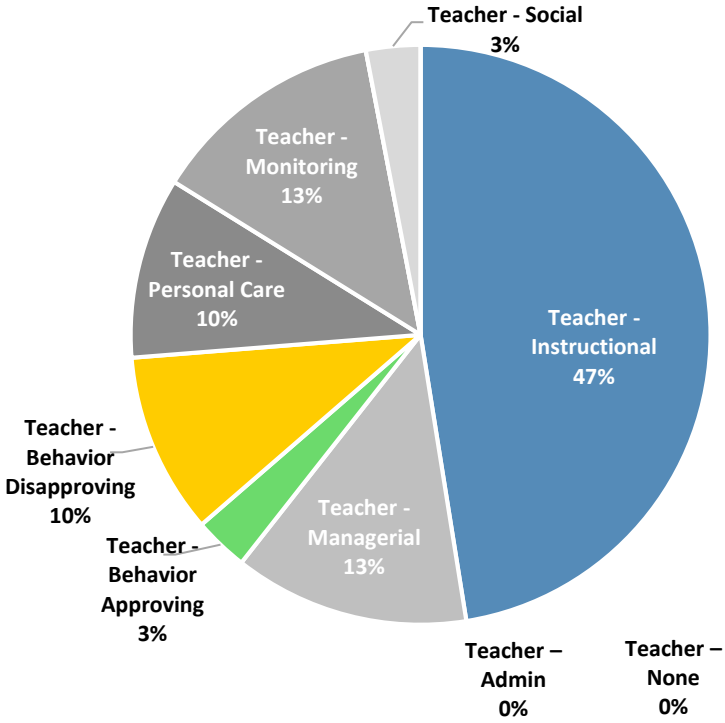
Across ELCs (22 Classrooms) Spring 2018 Averages



Sunshine Fall 2017 Averages

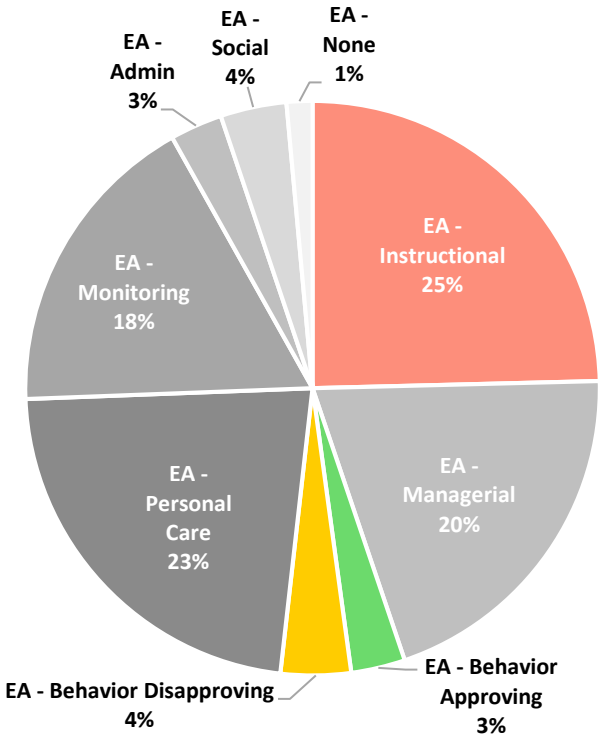


Sunshine Spring 2018 Averages

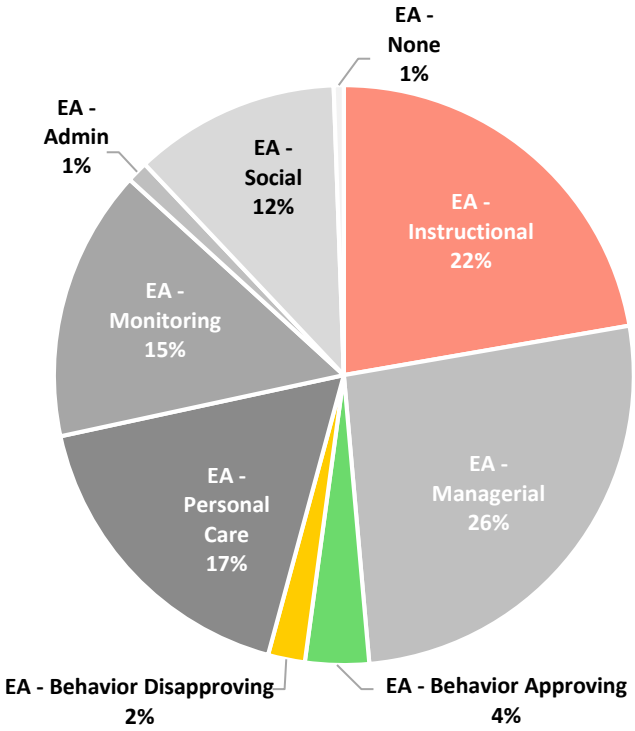


Percentage of Sweeps Assistants Observed in Various Type Tasks (Exclusive of Meal and Nap)

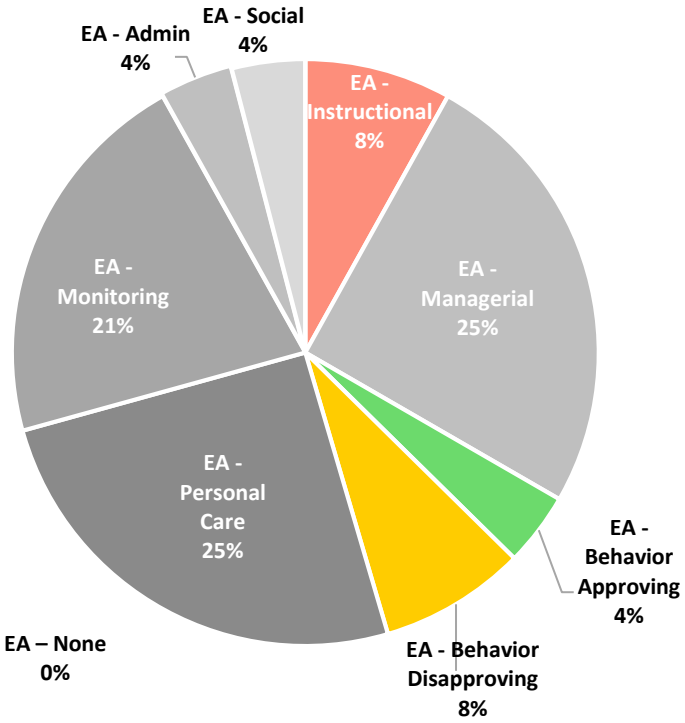
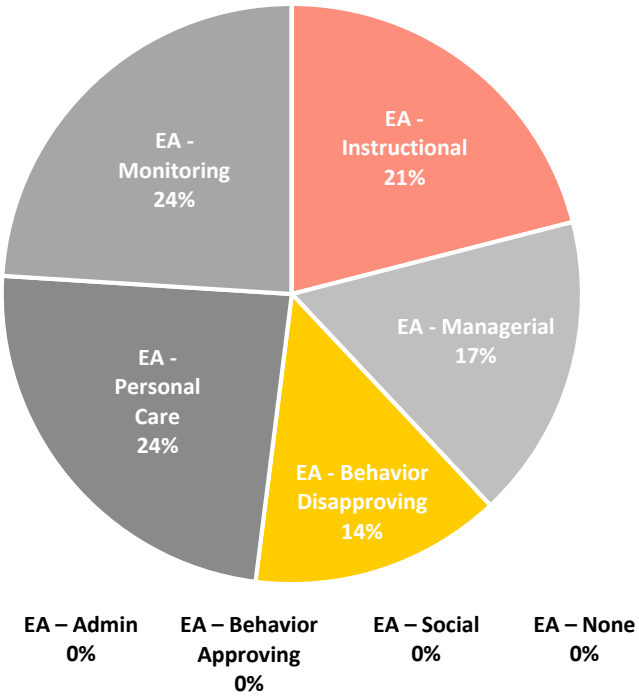
Across ELCs (22 Classrooms) Fall 2017 Averages



Across ELCs (22 Classrooms) Spring 2018 Averages



Moo Fall 2017 Averages



Moo Spring 2018 Averages