

Key Findings and Implications from the Universal Preschool Child Outcomes Study (UPCOS), 2007-2008

First 5 LA Commission Meeting
February 12, 2009



MATHEMATICA
Policy Research, Inc.

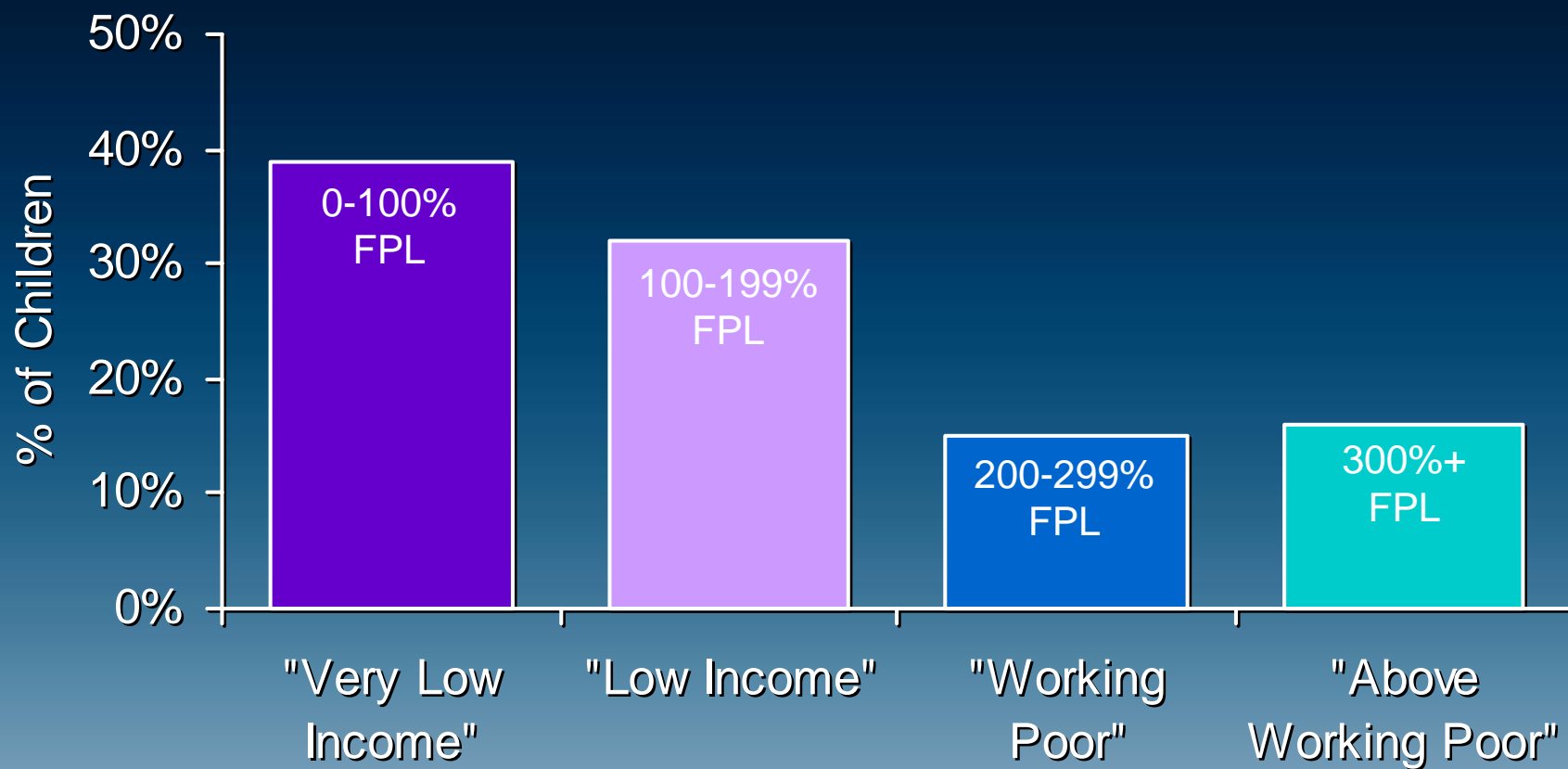
Goals of this Presentation

- Provide overview of UPCOS.
- Summarize main findings.
- Discuss implications for program improvement and future research.

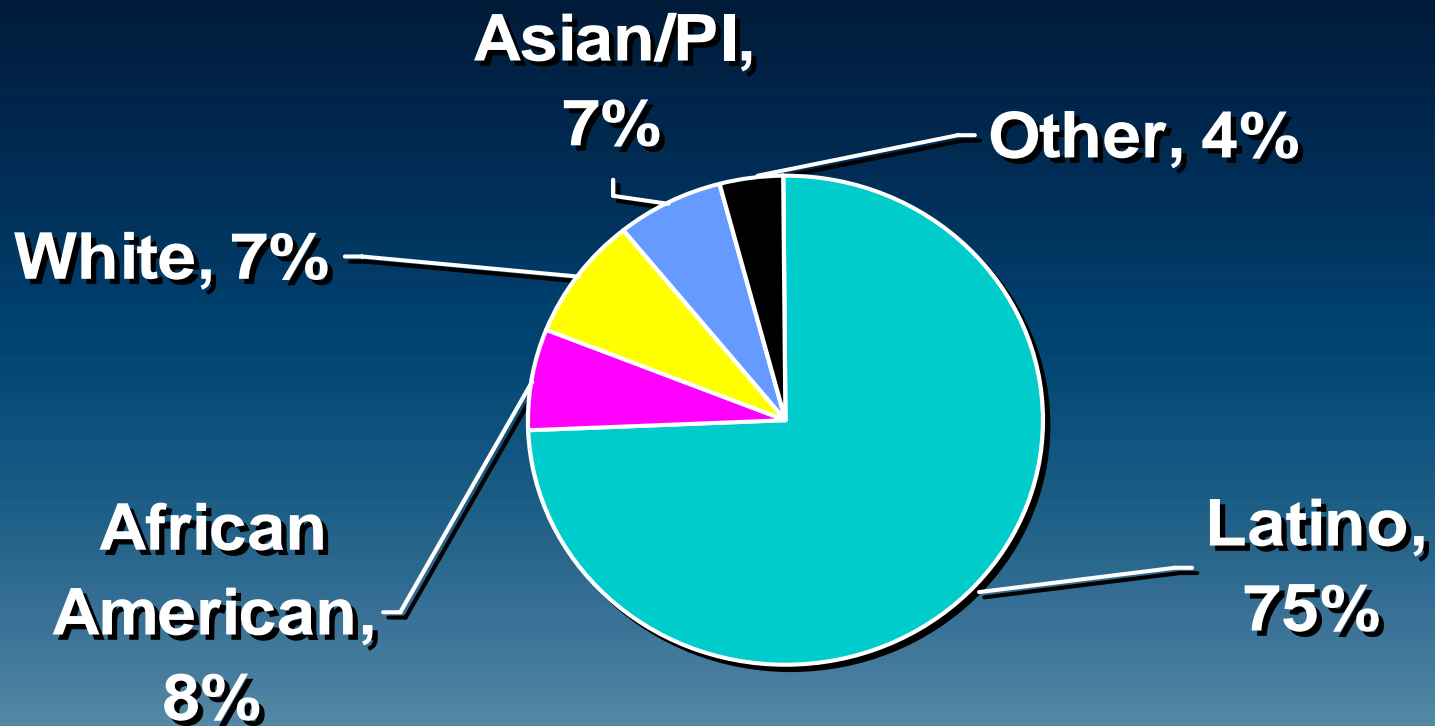
UPCOS: Overview

- **Representative sample of 1,555 children from 97 center-based programs selected summer 2007.**
- **Data collected fall and spring 2007-2008.**
- **Multi-method data collection included:**
 - ◆ **Direct child assessments (N=1,555)**
 - ◆ **Parent interviews and ratings (N=1,379)**
 - ◆ **Teacher interviews and ratings (N=147)**
 - ◆ **Classroom observations (N=87)**

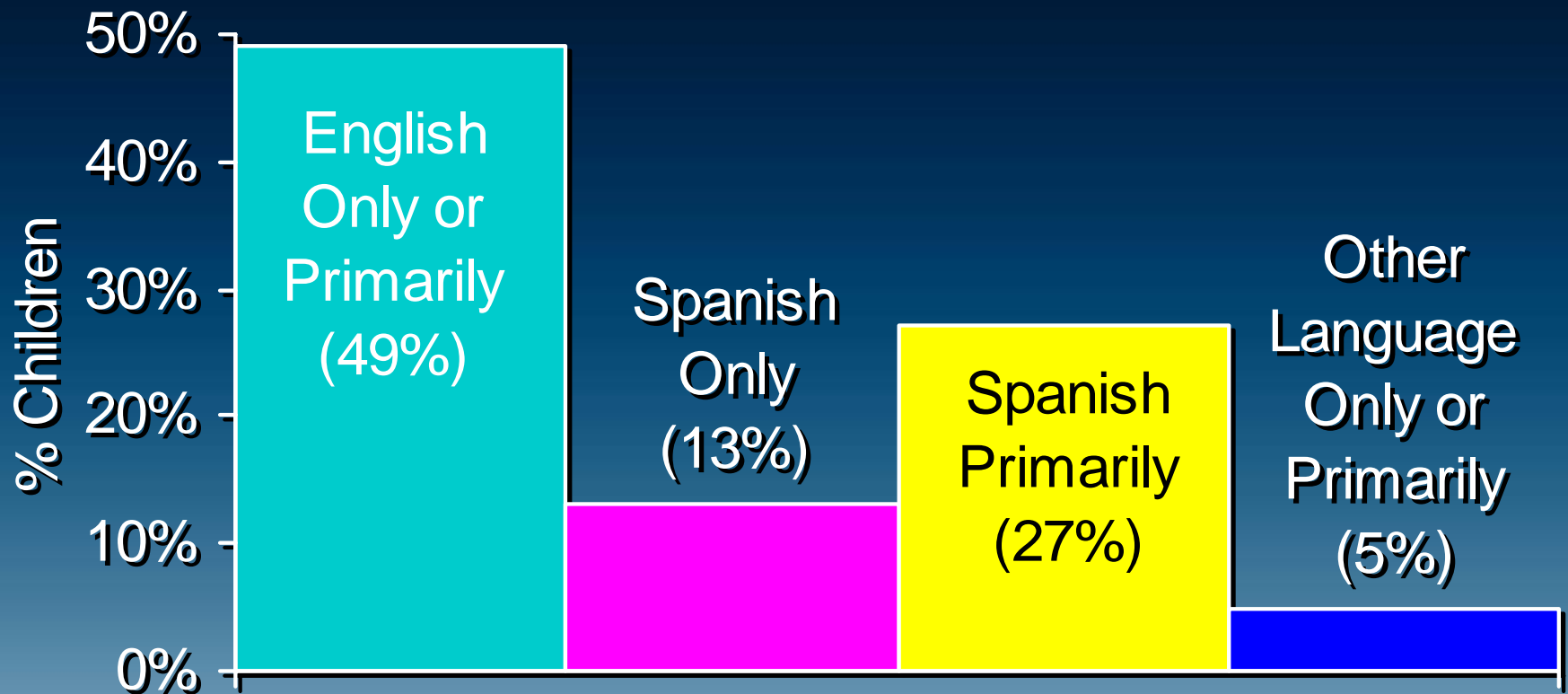
Family Income



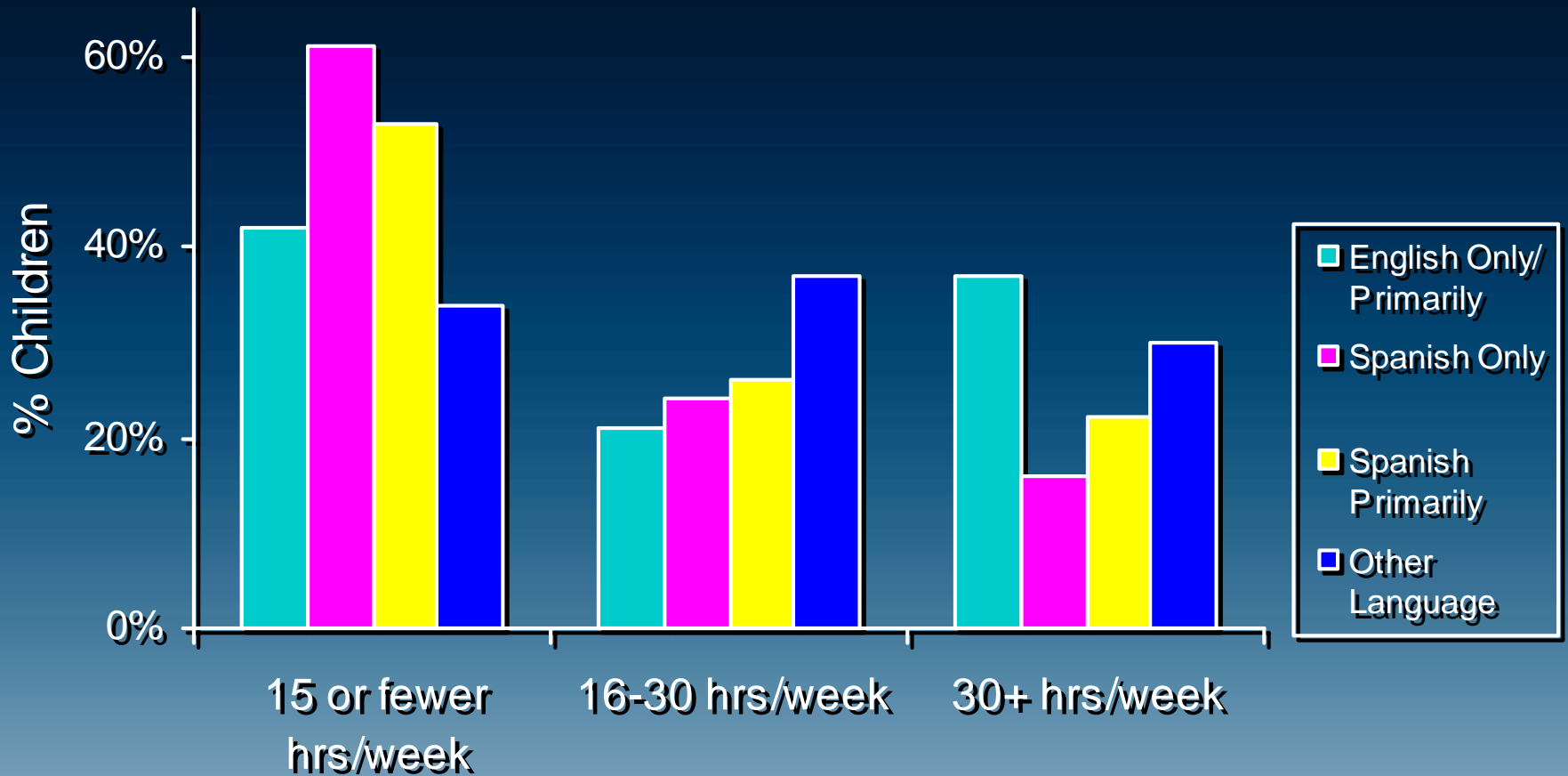
Children's Race/Ethnicity



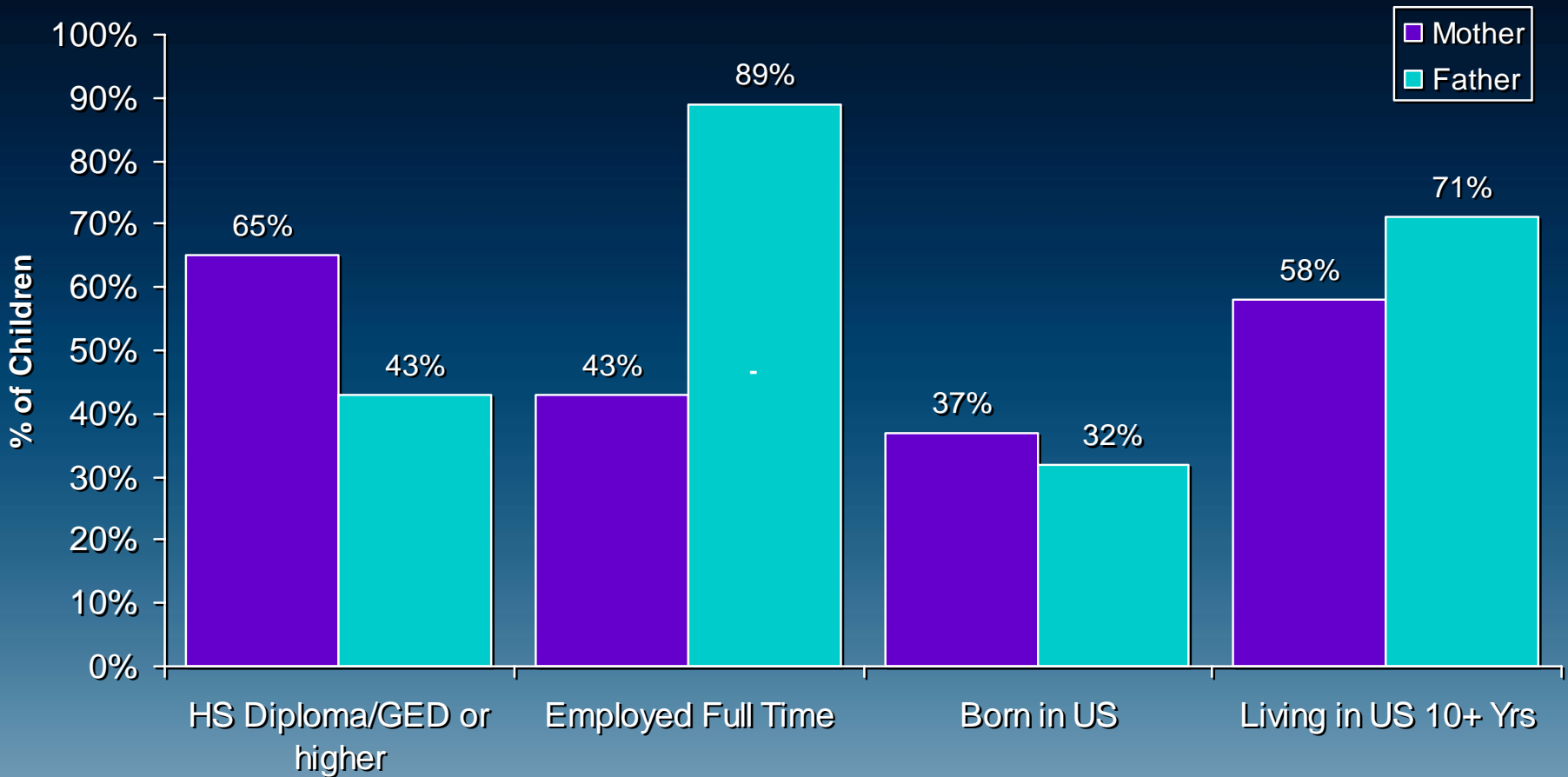
Groups of Children by Language



Hours per Week in LAUP Program by Language Group



Characteristics of Parents



Children's School Readiness Outcomes

- Children's language and literacy skills, on average, were above national norms. However, Spanish-speaking children's spelling scores and all children's expressive vocabulary were lower.
- Positive social skills were above national norms.
- Negative behaviors below (better) than norms.
- Children's early math skills improved (no national comparison available yet).
- Children performed well in measures of self-regulation, attention, and impulse control.
- 20% of LAUP children had BMIs in the obese range.

Family and Child Characteristics Associated with Outcomes

- Children in families with more than 3 risk factors had lower spring scores.
- Spanish-speaking children performed lower than English-speaking children.
- Children improved from fall to spring, but performance of low-scoring children was still not up to national norms by the end of preschool.
- Scores of some of the lowest scoring children indicate that they may have unidentified special needs.

Program Characteristics

- Teachers were well educated (61% with BA or higher degree) and experienced (avg. of 12 years teaching preschool).
- 31% of children were in classes using High/Scope or Creative Curriculum.
- 33% were in classes with no specific curriculum.
- 32% were in classes where teachers did not screen for health or developmental problems.

Classroom Quality*

- Average class size (observed) = 18; Average child:staff ratio = 6:1 but range was wide.
- Overall quality was equal to or higher than found in other studies.
- Scores on the Instructional Support domain were low (similar to findings in other studies)
- ECERS-R scores and teachers' education (AA or higher) were associated with CLASS scores.
- Class size was associated with CLASS scores (larger classes = lower quality).
- However, Star rating was not associated with CLASS scores.

Implications: Supports for ELL Children

- **Given the lower performance among Spanish-speaking children, need to understand why attendance rates are lower than English-speaking children.**
- **Teachers need the skills, strategies, and support to teach ELL children more effectively, particularly in language and literacy.**

Implications: Developmental Screenings

- **Given the low levels of performance of a substantial percentage of LAUP children, and the high percentage who do not receive developmental screenings, greater attention is needed to ensure that providers conduct early developmental screenings to identify and work with children in the lower range of the distribution.**

Implications: Instructional Support and Curriculum Standards

- Although overall program quality was generally good, teachers' low scores in providing “instructional support” for children highlights an opportunity to provide teachers more support in concept development, quality of feedback to children, and language modeling.
- Given the absence of established, comprehensive curricula in a large number of programs, develop more specific curriculum standards.

Implications: STAR Ratings

- **Given the finding that components of the Star rating (ECERS-R scores and teachers' education) were associated with observed classroom quality on the CLASS but the Star ratings overall were not, consider re-weighting the Star rating system.**

Acknowledgments and Many, Many Thanks to...

- Evelyn Martinez, Armando Jimenez, Katie Fallin, Patricia Lozano, and Christine Ong of First 5 LA who worked hand-in-hand with the evaluation team throughout.
- Gary Mangiofico, Daphne De Porres, Kimberly Hall, and all the LAUP staff and coaches who helped the study succeed.
- Michael López, Executive Director of the National Center for Latino Child & Family Research whose expert guidance and support was invaluable to the study.
- The 97 program directors and 147 teachers in LAUP programs who made our data collection possible.
- And the 1,555 children and their parents who allowed us to do the assessments, conduct the interviews, and be in the children's classrooms. Without their willing cooperation, none of this would have been possible.