



Vermont Birth to Three

Vermont Community Preschool Collaborative (VCPC)/ Vermont Birth to Three (VB3) Teaching Strategies GOLD[®] (TSG) 2013-2014 Pilot Final Evaluation

Background and Key Outcomes of the 2013-2014 TSG Pilot

The knowledge and skills to assess a child's developmental progress, as well as the ability to *use* assessment data to support a child's developmental progress and provide individualized instruction, are recognized as essential elements of a high quality early childhood program. Accordingly, the Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) requires the use of *Teaching Strategies GOLD*[®] (TSG) in publicly funded pre-kindergarten programs.

In July 2013, the A.D. Henderson Foundation provided funding for a collaborative initiative to help strengthen and expand a state-wide system of assessment of the developmental progress of children from birth to school age, by bringing TSG to approximately 40 providers who care for Vermont's young children in private home-based and center-based child care programs through the spring of 2014. The 2013-2014 TSG Pilot Project partners included the Vermont Community Preschool Collaborative (VCPC), Vermont Birth to Three (VB3), and the Vermont Agency on Education (AOE).

Aside from the key goal of improving the quality of early care that children receive, other goals of the pilot included learning about the challenges of incorporating community-based child care programs in a state-wide system of assessment and identifying the best ways for overcoming those challenges. The pilot also sought to give providers powerful tools for communicating with families about their children's development, using the rich portfolio of information about each child provided by TSG. The pilot resoundingly achieved these goals, with key outcomes including:

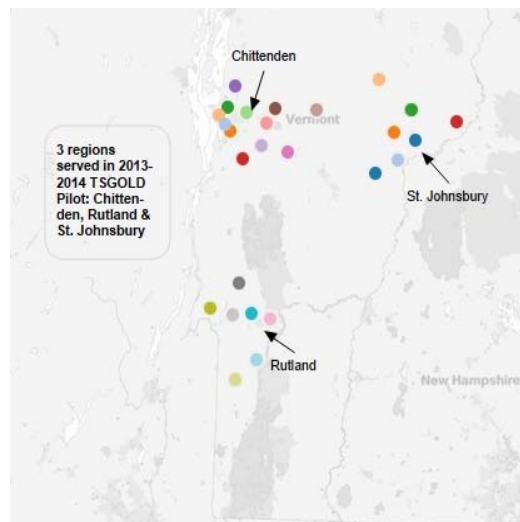
1. Among providers --
 - a. Improved child development observation knowledge & skills
 - b. Translation of newly acquired knowledge & skills into higher quality early care and education practices, which translated into higher ratings for certain providers in Vermont's Quality Rating and Improvement System (Step Ahead Recognition System or "STARS")
 - c. Improved technology literacy
 - d. Improved family communication and support practices
2. Among communities --
 - a. Newly established pre-kindergarten partnerships
3. Among pilot partners --
 - a. Gleaning of key insights on supporting the use of TSG among home- and center-based child care providers.

The following report provides a more in-depth look at the key outcomes of the pilot, including some of the lessons learned from the 2013-2014 pilot that will be applied to improving the outcomes of the upcoming 2014-2015 pilot.



Initial provider interest in the pilot remained strong.

- 65 applicants, with a total of 40 (62%) providers selected
- 33 providers completed the pilot (83% of the 40-member cohort)
 - Representing 29 unique child care programs
 - Covering 27 unique locations in the three pilot regions of Chittenden, Rutland and St. Johnsbury.

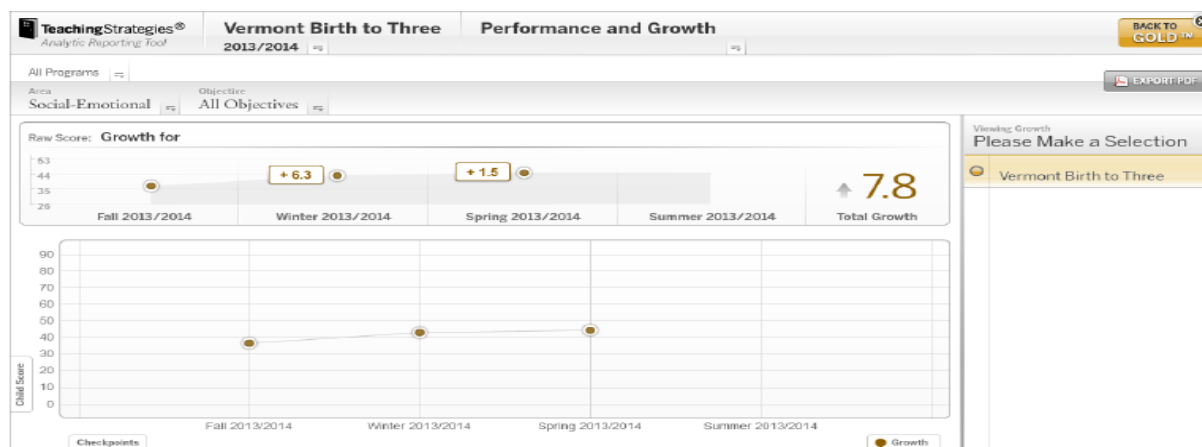


Children were positively impacted.

- The pilot began with 295 children being assessed and ended with 260 children (88%).
 - Of the 260 children, 112 were infants & toddlers.
 - There was an average ratio of portfolios (children) to providers of about 8.
 - Additional children were assessed through the pilot, through other funding sources.
 - A total of 15,235 unique pieces of child observation documentation were collected on the assessed children over the course of the pilot (2,887 of which were voluntarily collected by providers).
- Using TSG's powerful on-line reports feature, a TSG Snapshot Report was run in Spring 2014 on the assessed cohort of children in the pilot, comparing where the pilot children were collectively in their development to widely held expectations. In all 7 areas of development, the pilot cohort children met or exceeded widely held expectations by an overwhelming majority.

| Area of Development | Met or Exceeded Widely Held Expectations |
|------------------------|--|
| Social-Emotional | 90% |
| Physical - Gross Motor | 96% |
| Physical - Fine Motor | 98% |
| Language | 92% |
| Cognitive | 94% |
| Literacy | 86% |
| Mathematics | 84% |

- For illustrative purposes, an example is provided below of a report that visualizes the growth of an individual child's (identity concealed) social-emotional development over the course of the pilot.



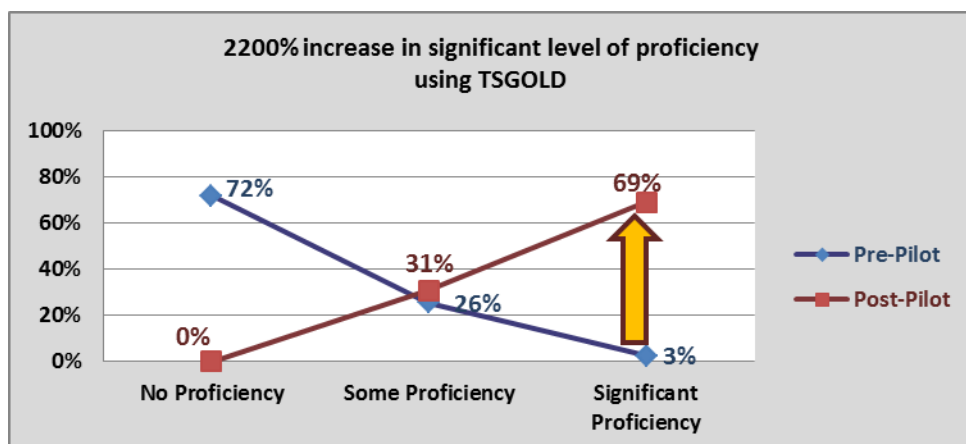


- Anecdotal feedback from providers corroborates evaluation data collected indicating that using the Teaching Strategies Gold system positively impacted the children in their programs.

In their own words: "It's helped me be more purposeful in planning 'curriculum' helping me to have a more well-rounded program. It has also helped me see some children (higher needs/spirited) in a different perspective and helped me to better support them."

Providers improved their child development observation knowledge & skills.

- Pre-pilot, 97% of providers indicated that they wanted to increase their knowledge about individual child development and, post-pilot, 92% of providers reported some to a significant increase.
- Pre-pilot, 97% of providers indicated that they wanted to improve their skill level in conducting child observations and, post-pilot, 100% of providers reported some to a significant improvement.
- A majority of the selected providers had originally been novices with TSG, but 69% who completed the pilot reported a significant level of proficiency (up from 3%, which is a 2200% increase in the rate of providers reporting a significant level of proficiency).
- Overall, 100% of providers who completed the pilot reported having some to significant proficiency in using TSG.
- The TSGOLD Inter-Rater Reliability Certification Test was administered, with an overall average score across all six domains of 89.8% (out of a maximum of 100%), and the average number of attempts providers made in order to achieve a passing score of at least 80% was 1.2 times.

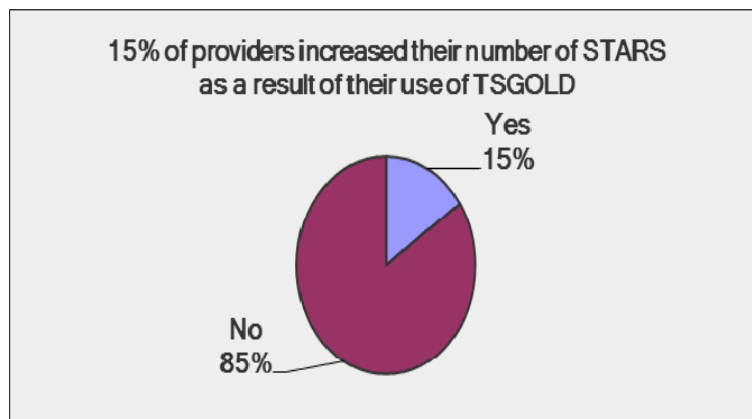


Providers translated their newly acquired knowledge & skills into higher quality early care and education practices.

- Documentation practices --
 - Pre-pilot, only 41% of providers were regularly documenting individual child development progress and/or concerns, whereas post-pilot 69% of providers were regularly documenting progress and/or concerns, which is a 68% increase in regular documentation practices.
- Use of child assessment information --
 - Pre-pilot, 100% of providers wanted to increase their frequency of using child assessment information to plan strategies and activities that support individual children and, post-pilot, 92% of providers were doing that more frequently.
 - Pre-pilot, 100% of providers wanted to increase their frequency of using child assessment information to develop early childhood curriculum and, post-pilot, 92% of providers were doing that more frequently.

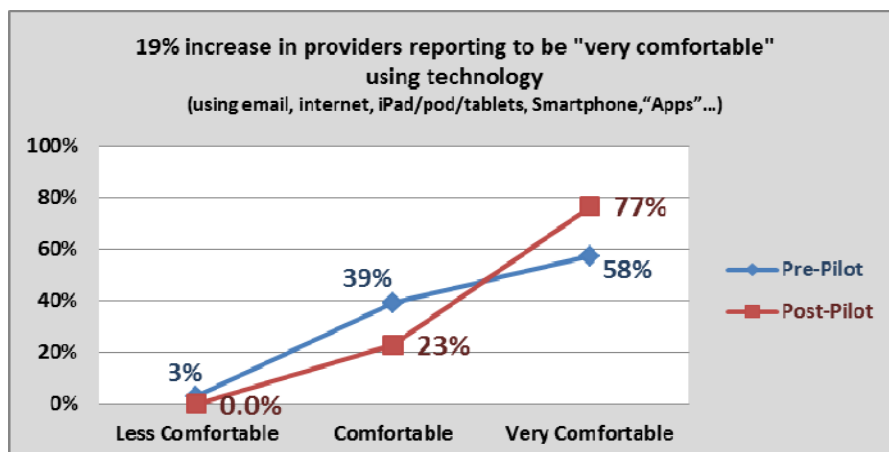


- Improved practices translated into higher ratings for 15% (5) of the participating providers who were already enrolled in Vermont's Quality Rating and Improvement System (Step Ahead Recognition System or "STARS"), with --
 - 2 providers increasing to 3 STARS
 - 1 provider increasing to 4 STARS
 - 1 provider increasing to 5 STARS
 - 1 provider planning to apply for an increase in STARS.



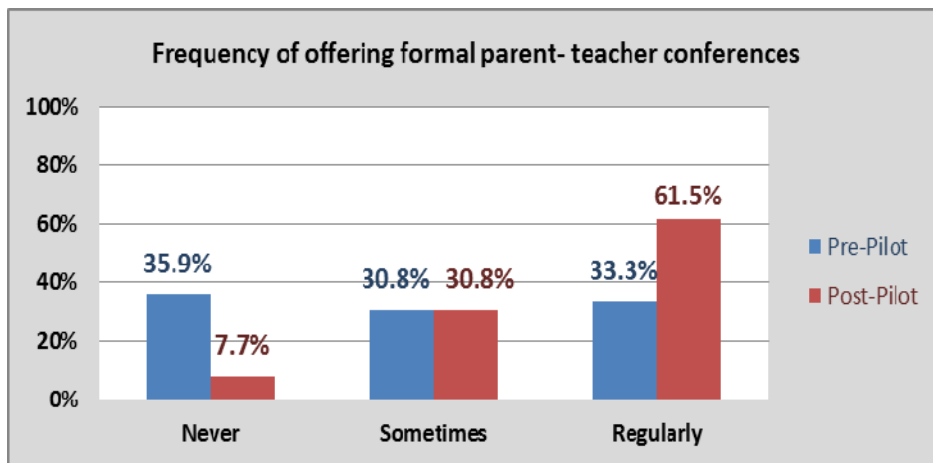
Providers improved their comfort level (literacy) with technology.

- 96% of providers reported that the iPad they received as part of the pilot supported their use of TSG.
- There was a 19 percentage point increase in the number of providers who reported that they felt very comfortable using technology (using email, internet, iPad/iPod/tablets, Smartphone, Apps, etc.), going from 58% to 77%.



Providers improved their family communication and support practices.

- Use of individual child assessment information when communicating with families about their child's development --
 - Pre-pilot, 100% of participants indicated that they wanted to increase that practice and, post-pilot, 92% of providers reported some or a significant increase in the frequency.
- Frequency of offering formal parent-teacher conferences --
 - Pre-pilot, only a third (33.3%) of providers offered them regularly and, post-pilot, almost two-thirds (61.5%) of providers offered them regularly, representing an 85% increase in regularly holding parent-teacher conferences.



- Providers anecdotally expressed improved interactions with families.

In their own words: "It has ... given me a wonderful way to share with parents all the things we do at daycare. I also love the strength-based perspective of the [parent] conference forms, and think it is a fantastic way to community with parents. I've had nothing but positive feedback from the parents as well."

Communities were positively impacted.

- Almost a quarter (23%) of providers established a pre-k partnership with a school district (Act 62), since participating in the pilot.
- The percentage of providers who had a pre-k partnership dropped slightly from 29% of the original 40 providers who were surveyed prior to the pilot beginning to 27% of the 33 providers who completed the pilot (decrease of 3 partnerships), suggesting that some of the providers who prematurely ended their participation in the pilot had a pre-k partnership but not necessarily indicating that those 3 partnerships ended.

The pilot partners were positively impacted.

- When asked after the pilot about strategies and tools providers found helpful in creating the time needed to use TSG (allowing multiple responses), the most frequently checked responses were as follows, which will be helpful information to pilot partners in providing even better support to providers in the 2014-2015 pilot:
 1. 81% selected "Using an iPad for audio & photo recording (documentation)"
 2. 77% selected "Conducting observations during already scheduled activities (e.g., meal times & outdoor play times)"
 3. 65% selected, "Using the TSG App"
 4. 35% selected, "Using an iPhone for audio & photo recording (documentation)"
 5. 19% selected, "Using other strategies & tools," offering the following comments --
 - "We found it very effective to divide up the domains among staff for assessment purposes, and plan to continue with this model in some capacity."
 - "[Take] photos and go back and add them, post-its [are helpful to use] if necessary."
 6. 12% selected, "Utilizing a sub or assistant"



- When invited after the pilot to share anything they would like the pilot partners to know about their experience, provider responses fell into the following (paraphrased) categories, which are listed in descending rate of frequency provided and will be used to improve the strategies of the 2014-2015 pilot:
 1. "Thank you"
 2. "The pilot improved my assessment skills"
 3. "Needed iPad sooner"
 4. "The pilot improved the quality of my program" & "Want more training"
 5. "Am now considering a pre-k partnership" & "Would like to offer suggestions for improving the TSG App"

In their own words:

"Participating in the VB3 TSG pilot program provided a huge leap in professional development for our teachers and staff. There were many "aha" moments this year because of TSG, and it definitely increased the quality of our program."

"This pilot program provided our agency with specific tools and information to better participate in its first pre-k partnership, working with TSG for the first time. With the training and tech support from VB3, along with the iPad, we were able to take the information we gained from TSG, and apply it to the program, faster and more efficiently than we would have on our own. The result was to increase quality in our pre-k program on many levels! Thank you very much for offering this opportunity to us! I would highly recommend it to others!"

"Access to the TS child develop objectives greatly increased my understanding of child development around specific skills. I find myself using this knowledge on the spot, even when not 'documenting'."

