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## **New randomized controlled trial shows professional development aligned with Teaching Strategies' ecosystem improves teacher retention and child outcomes**

*Results show a 23-percentage point increase in teacher retention and significant gains in child development*

**NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J.** – A new working paper finds that preschool classrooms where teachers received an intervention designed to strengthen curriculum implementation, effective teaching practices, and teachers' engagement with Teaching Strategies® fully digital ecosystem experienced significant gains in teacher retention and children's development.

The *Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum Implementation and Ecosystem Engagement Study* was conducted by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) at Rutgers University from 2021 to 2024. This study of 125 New Jersey preschool classrooms using the Creative Curriculum focused on understanding how additional professional development, and the increased engagement with digital tools this intervention encouraged, influenced teaching practices, classroom quality, teacher well-being, and child outcomes. Classrooms were randomly assigned to either receive virtual, live professional learning aligned with the Teaching Strategies digital ecosystem or business-as-usual practices.

**Key Findings:**

- Teacher retention increased substantially, by an estimated 23 percentage points, highlighting the importance of sustained support for educators.
- Both treatment and control groups improved over time, but the intervention did not lead to measurable gains in classroom quality or curriculum fidelity.
- Estimated effects on children's outcomes differed by assessment method. While independent research measures did not detect statistically significant differences, teacher-administered, curriculum-aligned assessments evidenced large gains in children's social-emotional, language, and math skills.
- Higher retention, greater participation in training and use of digital tools were associated with stronger child outcomes across various domains.
- Teachers receiving the PD reported higher levels of professional accomplishment and lower emotional exhaustion. Qualitative findings indicated that educators viewed the curriculum as engaging, easy to implement, and supportive of children's learning.

"Teacher turnover is a persistent challenge that impacts child outcomes, continuity of care for families and children, provider costs, and professional development efforts," **said Milagros Nores, co-director for research and research professor at NIEER.** "This study shows that when we invest in our teachers, they are more likely to stay in their roles, and when they stay, children benefit."

Teaching Strategies is a leading provider of early childhood curriculum, assessment, professional development, and family engagement solutions. Its products, including the most widely used curriculum

and assessment solutions, The Creative Curriculum and GOLD, reach over 4 million children each year in more than 80 countries around the world.

"It's encouraging to see independent research provide clear evidence of what I observed firsthand as an educator and administrator: When teachers are supported in their roles, the benefits are far reaching, meaningfully impacting both teachers and children," **said Nicol Russell, chief academic officer at Teaching Strategies.** "This takeaway seems especially relevant and timely, as an increasing number of states expand access to early childhood education and face the challenges of growing and supporting an expanding workforce. We must continue to prioritize evidence-based, high-quality learning experiences including a coherent implementation approach in which curriculum, assessment, ongoing professional learning, coaching and digital resources operate as an integrated system."

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*The National Institute for Early Education Research at the Rutgers Graduate School of Education, New Brunswick, NJ, supports early childhood education policy and practice through independent, objective research and the translation of research to policy and practice.*