



WILDER RESEARCH, CHILD TRENDS, SRI INTERNATIONAL,  
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# Using a Common Conceptual Framework to Coordinate Evaluation of Minnesota Early Learning Foundation Initiatives



Center for Early Education and Development  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
+ HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

## Minnesota Early Learning Foundation (MELF)

Private foundation intending to:

- Improve access, information and program quality for families with young children
- Recommend cost-effective strategies for preparing children to succeed in school

www.melf.us

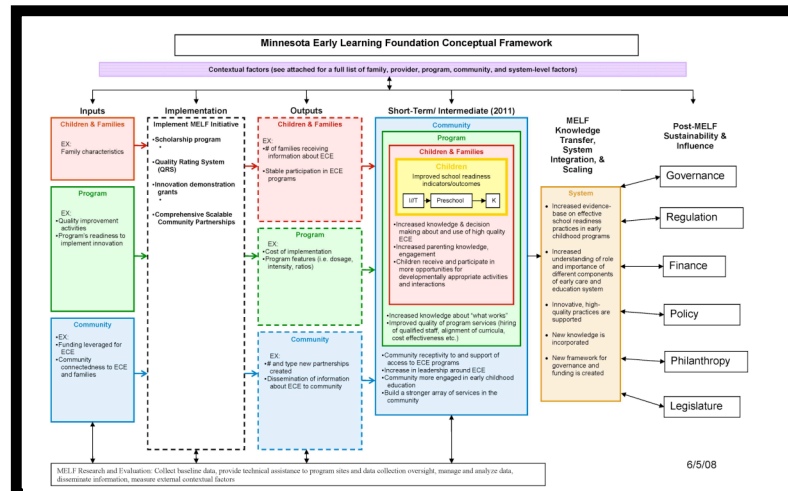
## Purpose

- Establish theoretical foundation of, and theory of change for, large-scale evaluation initiative focused on parent engagement and school readiness
- Provide coherence across disparate school readiness evaluations
- Guide design and measurement decisions

## Four foundational documents created

1. Conceptual framework
2. Initiative-wide evaluation questions
3. Shared measurement model
4. Taxonomy of Early Childhood Program Elements (see Godber, Kovan, Susman-Stillman, & McConnell, 2009)

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## Research Questions

### Children and Families:

To what extent are low-income children in MELF-funded projects on a developmental trajectory towards school readiness or ready for school as measured by a range of child assessment tools?

To what extent do low-income families served by MELF-funded programs and initiatives have access to and make use of:

- the resources available to them to help their children be ready for school
- the information available to them regarding the quality of early care and education programs?

### Programs:

To what extent are MELF-funded programs:

- meeting criteria for innovative, effective, high-quality programs
- more cost-effective than others in achieving similar results?

## Research Questions

### Communities:

How have MELF-funded programs:

- improved their local communities' abilities to sustain quality early childhood education programs
- contributed to the knowledge of best practices in early childhood education as defined by the MELF Program Taxonomy?

## Shared Measurement Model

- Parent Survey
- Child Assessment

DOMAIN	MEASURE	SCALEDOMAIN	0-11					
			0-11	1	2	3	4	5
			mo	yr	yr	yr	yr	yr
General = CORE for MELF	Developmental Observation Checklist System (DOCS)	Language, Motor, Social, Cognitive						
Cognitive	Woodcock-Johnson III (WJ-III)	Quantitative Concepts, Applied Problems						
Language	Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test IV (PPVT-IV) Form A	Receptive Language						
	Individual Growth & Development Indicator (IGDI)	Picture Naming (Expressive Language)						
	Receptive-Expressive Emergent Language (REEL)	Receptive & Expressive Lang.						
Literacy	Test of Preschool Emergent Literacy (TOPEL)	Print Concepts, Expressive Vocabulary, Phonological Awareness						
Social-Emotional	Social Competence & Behavior Evaluation (SCBE-30)	Social Competence, Affective Expression, Adjustment						
	Ages & Stages Questionnaires: Social Emotional	Personal social (e.g. self-regulation, compliance, interaction with others)						
	Early Childhood Longitudinal Study—Birth Cohort (ECLS-B)	5 Temperament Items						
Approaches to Learning	Preschool Behavior Learning Scale (PLBS)	Attention scale						
Health, Gross & Fine Motor	Captured on surveys, DOCS subscale, overall health rating	Includes social determinants of health (medical home, risk, insurance)						

## Other MELF partners:

