



Vermont Birth to Five

Vermont Birth to Five (VB5)
Teaching Strategies GOLD® (TSG)
2014-2015 Pilot
Final Evaluation

Background

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. The early adoption of public pre-k in 2015-2016 and the full implementation of public pre-k by 2016-2017 have placed an added spotlight on the importance of proficiency in TSG, as has the development of a statewide Comprehensive Early Childhood Assessment Plan that is currently underway as part of Vermont's Early Learning Challenge grant.

The 2014-2015 TSG pilot offered the opportunity to become proficient in child observation and the use of TSG to child care providers who care for Vermont's young children in private home-based and center-based programs in the Barre and Hartford AHS districts.

Beyond the key goal of improving the quality of early care that children receive, the pilot also sought to continue to identify the challenges of and best strategies for incorporating community-based child care programs into a state-wide system of assessment. In addition, the pilot 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 following report uses the Results-Based Accountability™ (RBA) framework to provide a synopsis of the key project outcomes, including:

- How much was done (*the scope of the project*)
- How well it was done (*the quality of the experience of the providers who were involved*)
- Whether anyone was better off as a result of the project (*improvements in overall quality of child care*).

The report concludes with cumulative lessons learned from the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 pilots, which will be applied to improving the process and outcomes of the 2015-2016 TSG training program.

How Much?

Provider participation

- 28 child care providers completed the full pilot through Spring 2015
 - 21 unique child care programs represented
 - 15 Center-based programs
 - 6 Home-based programs.
 - 21 unique locations covered in the two pilot regions of Barre and Hartford.



Child participation

- 237 children were assessed and had information finalized in all domains.
 - Of the 237 children, 43 were infants & toddlers.
 - Additional children were assessed through the pilot, through other funding sources.
 - A total of 10,213 unique pieces of child observation documentation were collected on the assessed children over the course of the pilot.

Training provided

- 20 hours of training were provided

iPads distributed

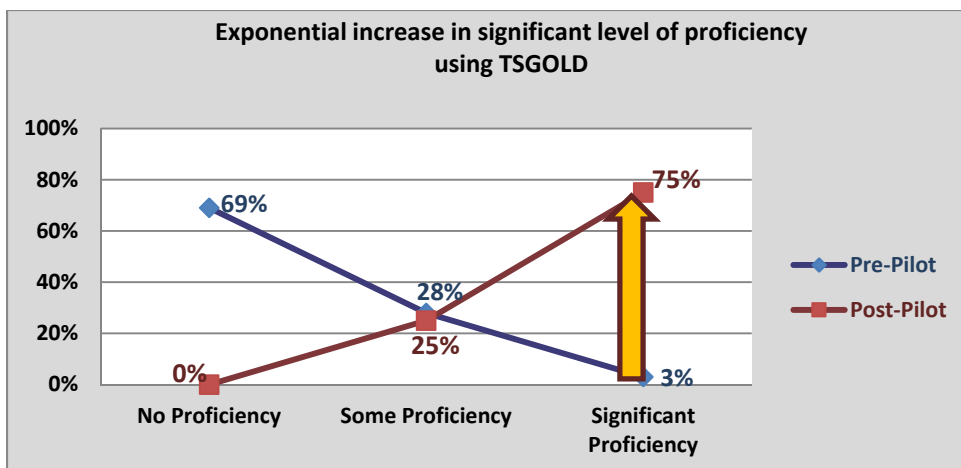
- 37 iPads were distributed

How Well?

- 40 provider participants were confirmed in August 2014, with 37 attending the first required training in Fall 2014 and 28 providers completing the full pilot through Spring 2015, resulting in a 76% retention rate.
- A "ripple effect" from the cohort of primary participants led to a total of 57 participants being engaged in the pilot at various levels of involvement, including ancillary personnel such as assistant teachers and others

Improved child development observation knowledge and skills

- 85% of providers reported having some to a significant increase in their knowledge about individual child development
- 95% of providers reported having some to a significant improvement in their skill level in conducting child observations
- 75% of providers reported having a significant level of proficiency after completing the pilot (up from approximately 3% pre-pilot), which is a 25 times increase in the rate of providers reporting to have a significant level of proficiency, and an additional 25% of providers reported having some level of proficiency in using TSG after completing the pilot (i.e., 100% reported having some to a significant level of proficiency after the pilot)





- The TSGOLD Inter-Rater Reliability Certification Test was administered at the pilot's mid-point, with an overwhelming majority (70%) of providers achieving a passing score during the first round of testing:

2014-2015	Passed Round 1	Passed Round 2	Passed Round 3	Passed Round 4-5	Passed round 6	Passed Round 7
Participating providers	70%	15%	9%	0%	3%	3%

- Providers anecdotally expressed that they had improved child observation skills and knowledge --

In their own words:

"This is my first year using TSGOLD and [I] really learned a lot from the trainings that were offered. After using the assessment in the Fall, I was able to work through some issues and did a more accurate assessment in the Spring."

"I became much more aware of the developmental stages for many of the children in my care as I made my observations."

"Learned much new info about what children should know before going to public kindergarten."

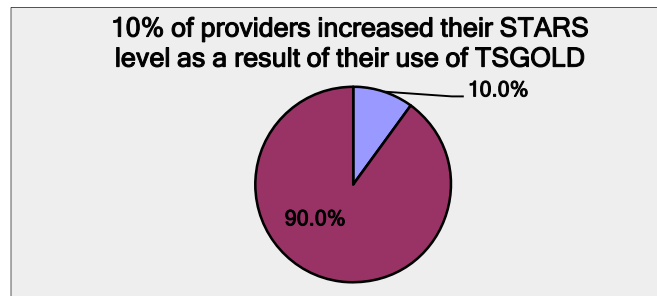
Is Anyone Better Off?

Higher quality of care and education practices

- 2 providers (10% of respondents to post-pilot survey) reported having increased their STARS level up to 4 stars

Improved care and education practices

- Documentation practices --
 - Pre-pilot, less than a third (30.6%) of providers reported that they were regularly documenting individual child development progress and/or concerns, whereas post-pilot an overwhelming majority (70%) of providers reported that they were regularly documenting individual child progress and/or concerns, which is an over two-fold increase in the rate of regular documentation practices.
- Use of child assessment information --
 - Pre-pilot, over 97% of providers reported wanting to increase their frequency of using child assessment information to plan strategies and activities that support individual children and, post-pilot, 80% of providers reported doing that more frequently.
 - Pre-pilot, over 94% of providers reported wanting to increase their frequency of using child assessment information to develop early childhood curriculum and, post-pilot, 80% of providers reported doing that more frequently.



Greater technological literacy

- 100% of providers reported that the iPad they received as part of the pilot supported their use of TSG
- 100% of providers reported that, since participating in the pilot they felt comfortable to very comfortable using technology (using email, internet, iPad/iPod/tablets, Smartphone, Apps, etc.)



- Providers anecdotally expressed that they had improved technological literacy --

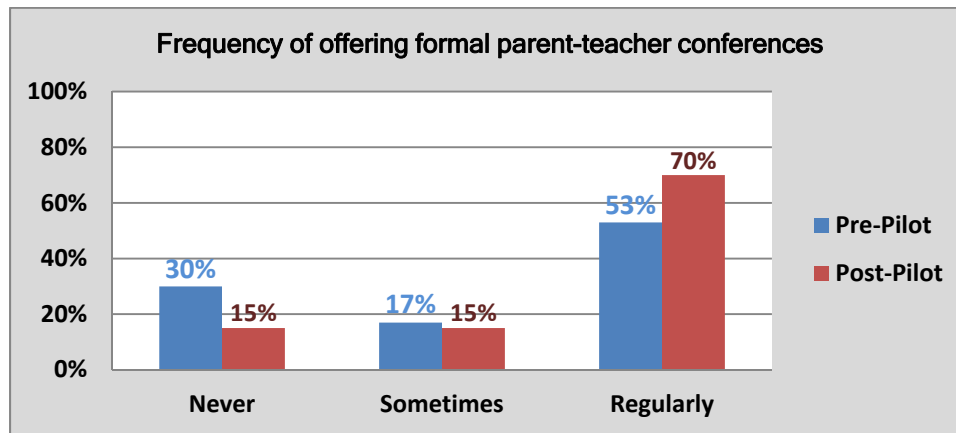
In their own words:

"The iPad was a HUGE reward, and I think it made more people want to participate."

"[TS GOLD is a] great useful tool. Learned to use an iPad."

Better family communication and support practices

- 85% of providers reported having some or a significant increase in the frequency of their use of individual child assessment information when communicating with families about their child's development
- 85% of providers reported having offering formal parent-teacher conferences regularly, up from 52.8% pre-pilot



Positive community impact

- Over half (55%) of providers reported becoming eligible to establish a pre-k partnership with a school district (Act 62/166), since participating in the pilot.
- Over half (55%) of providers reported having actually established a pre-k partnership with a school district (Act 62/166), since participating in the pilot.
- Providers anecdotally expressed the positive impact of the TSG pilot on their community --

In their own words:

"I'm VERY glad I took this class. I did not believe and still do not believe in assessing small children in the academic areas (math and literacy). However, TSG is required to be a partner in [a]ct 166 as well as EEI and EEE, so knowing the proper way to do the program is incredibly important and for that, I thank you both! I hope you continue to get the grants necessary to continue this training."

"I feel that this pilot program is a great opportunity for providers. It is a bit more challenging for home providers as there is only one person to do all the observations and documentation. With that said[,] I would and have recommended this program to others."

"Our center only operates during the school year and I am already starting to work on activities that will aide me in getting the information needed for the TSGOLD Assessment."

"So appreciative! Great teachers!"

"This program was so very valuable. The trainings were amazing!"



Lessons Learned from 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 pilots

- Several participants did not take advantage of the technical assistance component of the project. We have revised the TA Consultant role for the next cohort so that monthly contact and at least two face-to-face visits are required. Additionally, we will develop a spreadsheet for TA Consultants to track contacts and face-to-face visits.
- To date we have required project participants to collect documentation for and complete two scheduled sets of developmental checkpoints (October and May). We found that there was a general lull in ongoing observation and documentation during the winter months. To maximize the practice of participants conducting regular and frequent TSG observation and documentation submissions and to increase their proficiency in using the system, we will require completion of developmental checkpoints mid-way through the project. This will increase their activity to three sets of checkpoints (October, February, and May) with additional observations and documentation as supporting developmental evidence.
- We had overwhelmingly positive feedback regarding the trainings provided, as well as regarding the training facilitators. We found that the trainings we provided later in the project were not as highly attended as we anticipated.
- With the additional checkpoints required and in order to further incentivize continued engagement, we have revised the incentives schedule. Following the October checkpoints submission and successful completion of the TSG Interrater Reliability Certification, iPads will be distributed to participants. Additionally, an incentive in the amount of \$200 will be distributed following completion of the project.
- In instances when we were supporting programs that had multiple teachers participating in the project, we encountered some difficulty in determining which children were associated with each individual project participant. In order to more efficiently monitor participant activity in the system, we will develop a spreadsheet to track assignment of child portfolios with reference to which project participant is associated with each child.