

The Early Educator Support, Licensure, and Professional
Development Office: A Data Summary (2018-2019)



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Heather Taylor, Ph. D.


Department of Special Education and Child and Family Development
University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Quality Assurance and Reliability


- The North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process (NC TEP)
 - Performance evaluation instrument for all teachers of children in grades Pre-K – 12th
- Currently, there is no set standard of interrater reliability among evaluators in NC who use the rubric as part of the TEP with educators (Mazurek, 2012).
 - Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) who work in *nonpublic* NC Pre-K obtain a Birth-Kindergarten (B – K) license
 - Why is this a *unique* license?




Quality Assurance and Reliability

- High-quality, inclusive early childhood settings have benefits for typically developing children and children with disabilities and/or at-risk for DD (Odom et al., 2005; Gordon et al., 2013; Peisner-Feinberg, Schaaf, Hildebrandt, Pan, & Warnaar, 2015).
- Families and ECEs support high-quality inclusive programs, but barriers exist (Bailey, McWilliam, Buysse, and Wesley, 1998; Odom & McEvoy, 1990).

Quality Assurance and Reliability

- NC Support for High Quality ECE and Other Initiatives:
 - The Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge  grant
 - NC's Early Learning Challenge grant

Quality Assurance and Reliability

- Go Big for Early Childhood
- Institute of Medicine and National Research  Council
- NAEYC's "Power to the Profession"

Quality Assurance and Reliability

- National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER)
 - NC a leader in providing quality Pre-K for children and families

Quality Assurance and Reliability

- Why are these initiatives relevant to ECEs in NC who have obtained or are seeking B-K licensure?
- Teachers may benefit from the support of coaches and mentors by changing their teaching practices and applying evidence-based practices (Hsieh, Hemmeter, MCollum, & Otrosky, 2009; Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010; Knight & Wiseman, 2005; Kretlow, Wood, & Cooke, 2011; Sibley, Lawrence, & Lambert, 2010; Whitaker, 2000).

Quality Assurance and Reliability

NC TEP  Evidence-Based Practices 

- Because of the unique nature of B – K licensure, ECEs may need a specialized form of coaching

The EESLPD Office's Guiding Principles: The Foundation


1. Teachers must be respected as adult learners.



- *Four Components*

- Adult learners are self-directed
- Adult learners bring knowledge and experience
- Adult learners are goal-oriented
- Adult learners value relevancy and practicality





The EESLPD Office's Guiding Principles: The Foundation

2. Teachers progress through developmental stages.

- *Our support and PD should match their needs*
- *Other factors can affect teacher development*

The EESLPD Office's Guiding Principles: The Foundation

3. Individualized, strengths-based coaching supports encourages the use of effective high-quality practices.



The EESLPD Office's Guiding Principles: The Foundation

4. Trusting relationships are fundamental to building an effective team (teacher, site administrator, mentor, evaluator).



The EESLPD Office's Guiding Principles: The Foundation

5. Fostering reflective practice is essential to effective teaching.



The EESLPD Office's Guiding Principles: The Foundation

6. Research indicates that the teacher is the most crucial factor in the classroom for predicting child success.



Quality Assurance and Reliability

- The EESLPD Office's guiding principles serve as the foundation for the work we do with ECEs who hold a B-K license with its *unique* features.



- Each *principle* has a strong structural component to support the EESLPD Office Coaching Framework.
 - Grounded in research

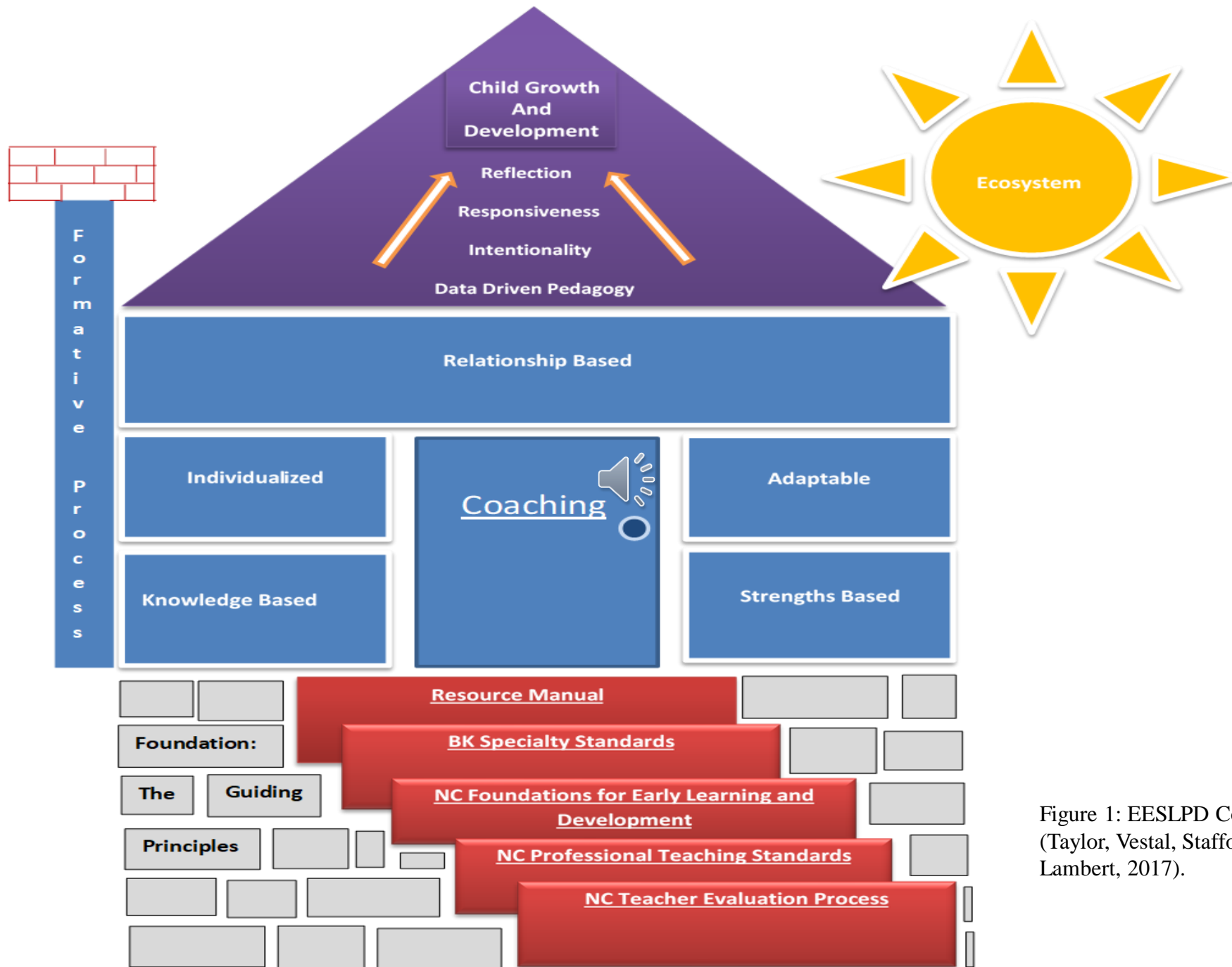


Figure 1: EESLPD Conceptual Framework (Taylor, Vestal, Stafford, Saperstein, & Lambert, 2017).

Research Questions

- 1. In what areas of the rubric used during the NC TEP (e.g. standards, elements) are ECEs making progress or not making progress?



- 2. How do ECEs responses regarding needs for support and the support they receive from mentors and evaluators align with the coaching components of the EESLPD Office conceptual framework?
- 3. What are the perceptions of ECEs regarding the supports provided to them by mentors and evaluators?

Method

- Research Design
 - Qualitative research methods
 - Secondary analysis of EOY survey responses (4 open-ended questions)
 - Focus group interviews
 - Individual interviews
 - Quantitative component (e.g., secondary analysis of NCEES data)

Quantitative Component

- What areas of the rubric used during the NC TEP (e.g. standards, elements) are ECEs making progress or not making progress?



- A cross-sectional, summative analysis of all five standards and corresponding elements was conducted. This analysis includes trend and pattern changes related to ECE rubric markings (NC TEP) over a three-year time period (e.g., 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018). Data presented does not follow individual ECE progress over these years.

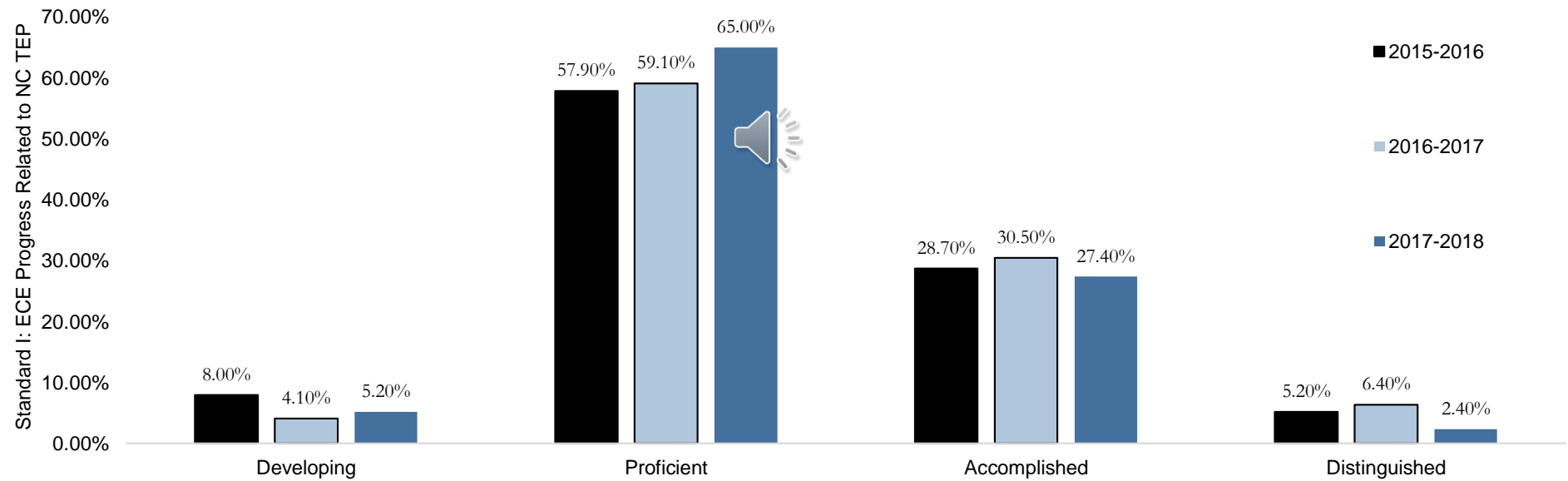
Quantitative Component

- The overall analysis for all five standards in the NC TEP, over the three-year period specified, shows a pattern of ECEs meeting the proficiency category of the marking areas in the rubric for Standards I-V.

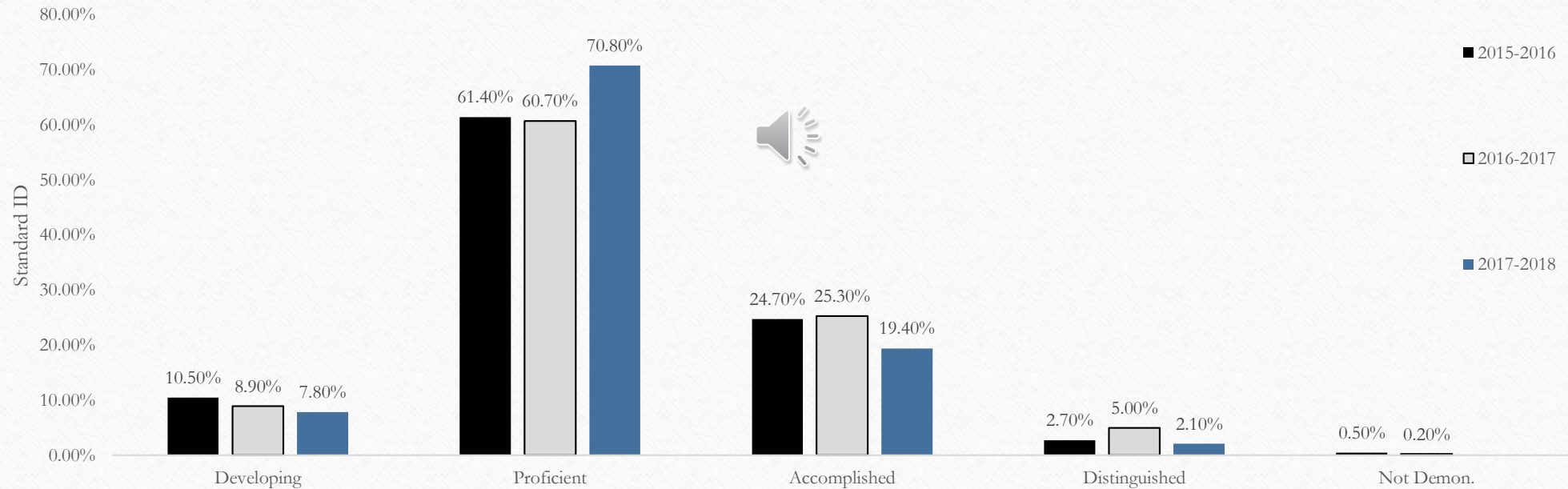


PROFICIENT

Standard I: Teachers Demonstrate Leadership



Standard ID: Teachers Advocate for Schools and Children



Survey Responses & Interviews

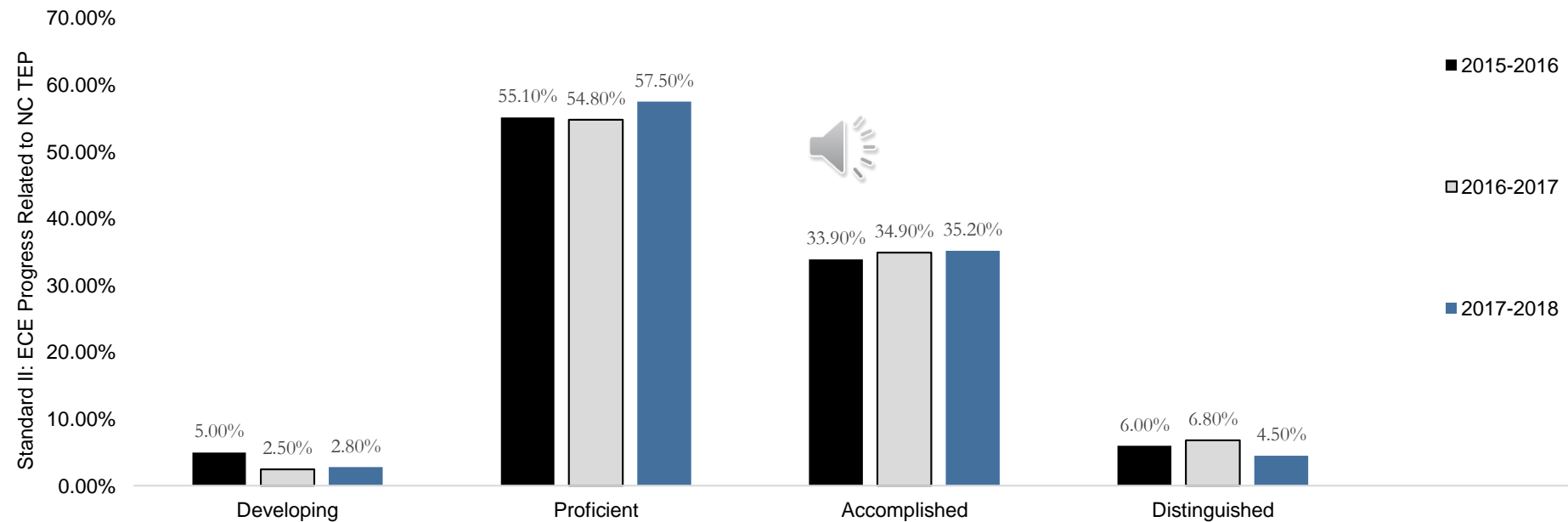
- Related to Standard ID - Survey respondents and ECEs who were interviewed indicated:

- They felt they had grown in leadership/advocacy (felt more confident in teaching).

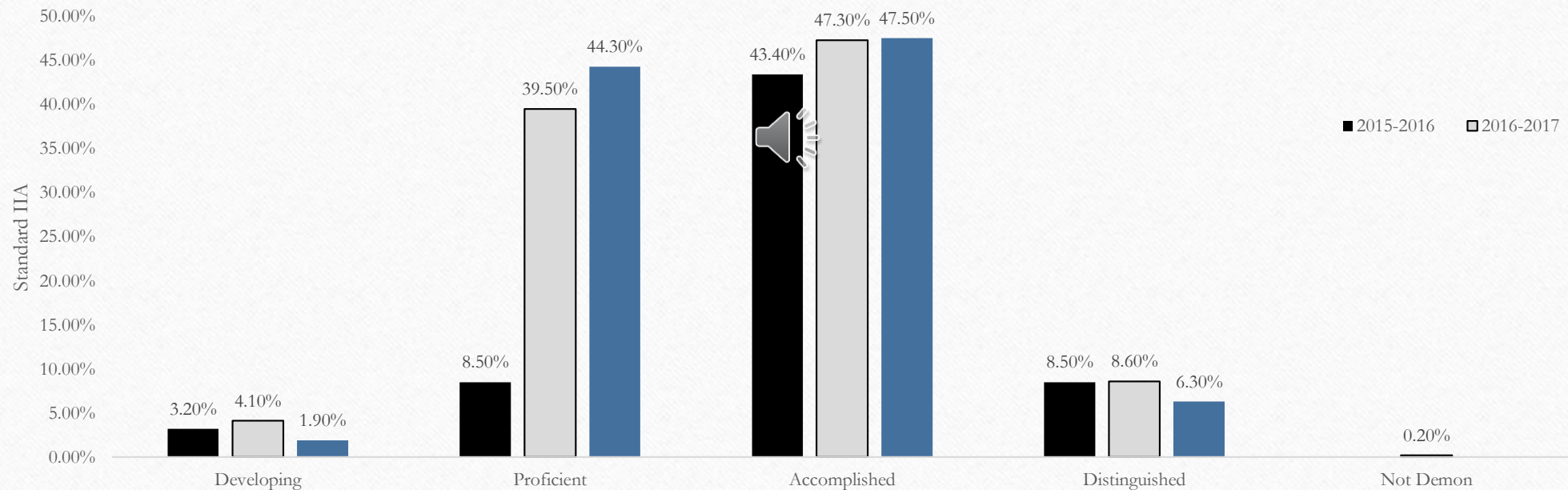
OR

- They needed more support and guidance advocating for themselves and in the classroom.

Standard II: Teachers Establish A Respectful Environment for a Diverse Population of Children



Standard IIA: Teachers Provide an Environment in Which Each Child Has a Positive, Nurturing Relationship with Caring Adults



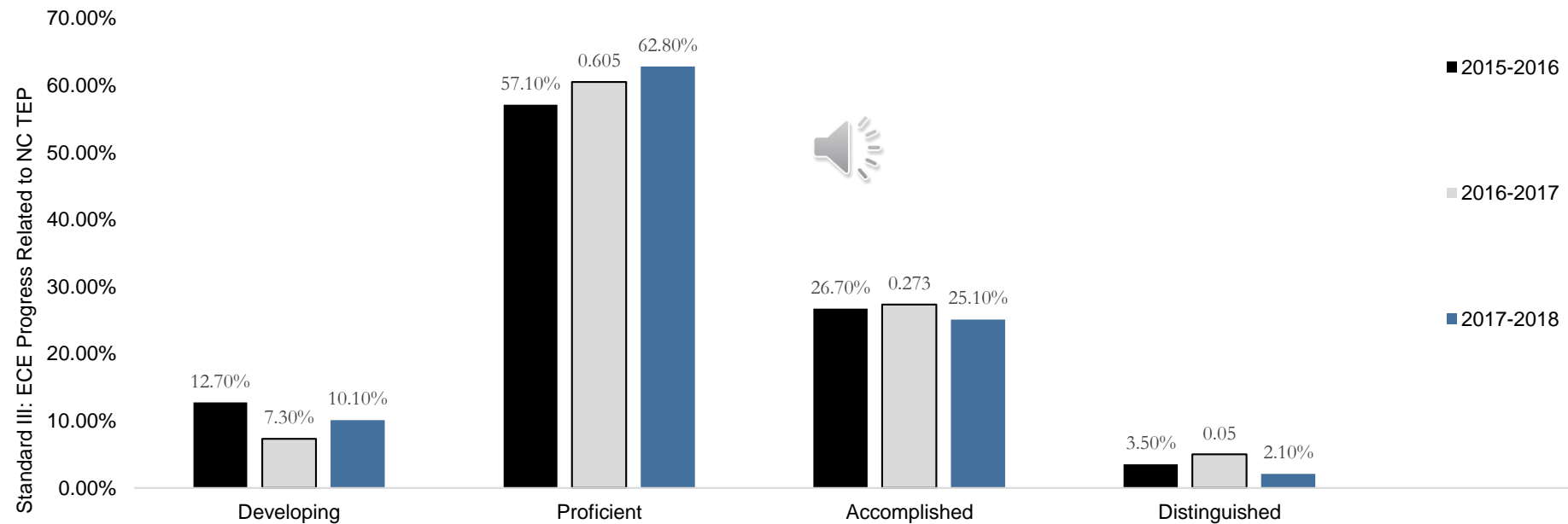
Survey Responses & Interviews

- Related to Standard IIA - Survey respondents and ECEs who were interviewed indicated:
 - Successes come from working with children in the classroom (routines, transitions, celebrations).

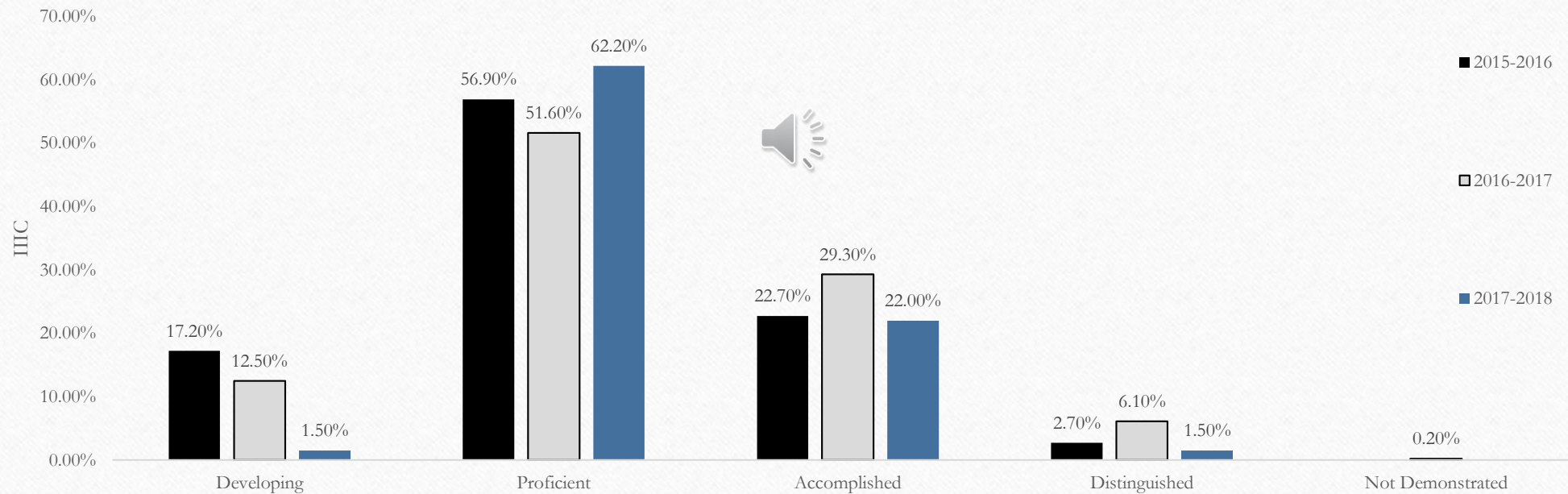
BUT

- Some expressed they still need guidance working with children with different abilities.

Standard III: Teachers Know the Content They Teach



Standard IIIC: Teachers Recognize The Interconnectedness Of Content Areas/Disciplines



Survey Responses & Interviews

- Related to IIIC - Survey respondents and ECEs who were interviewed indicated:

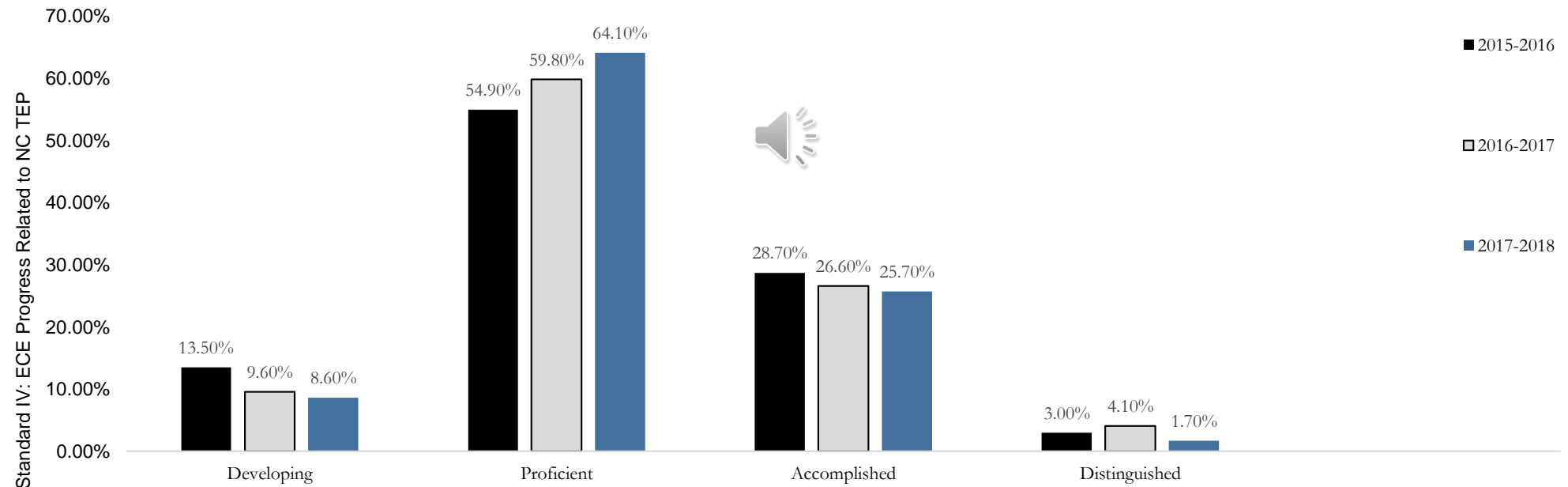
- Using children's interests is a challenge.



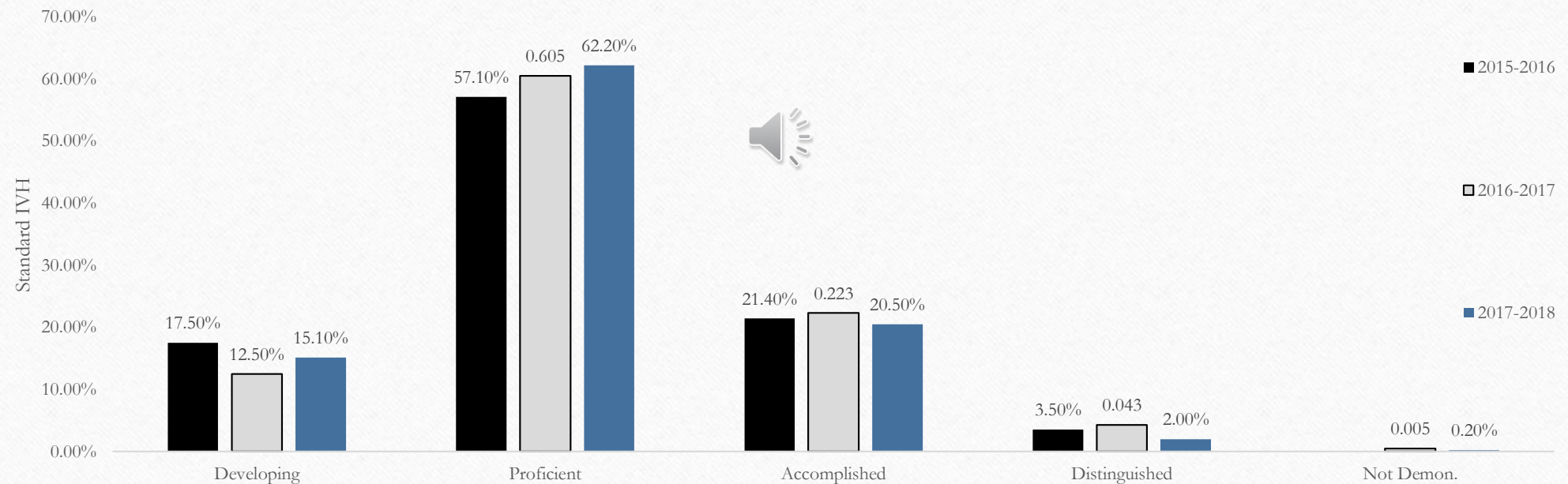
AND

- Understanding and being able to articulate that what they are doing is related to meeting requirements in the rubric as part of NC TEP (e.g., scaffolding instruction, making connections to previous learning, artifacts such as graphic organizers).

Standard IV: Teachers Facilitate Learning for Their Young Children



Standard IVH: Teachers Use A Variety of Methods To Assess What Each Child Has Learned



Survey Responses & Interviews

- Related to Standard IVH - Survey respondents and ECEs who were interviewed indicated:

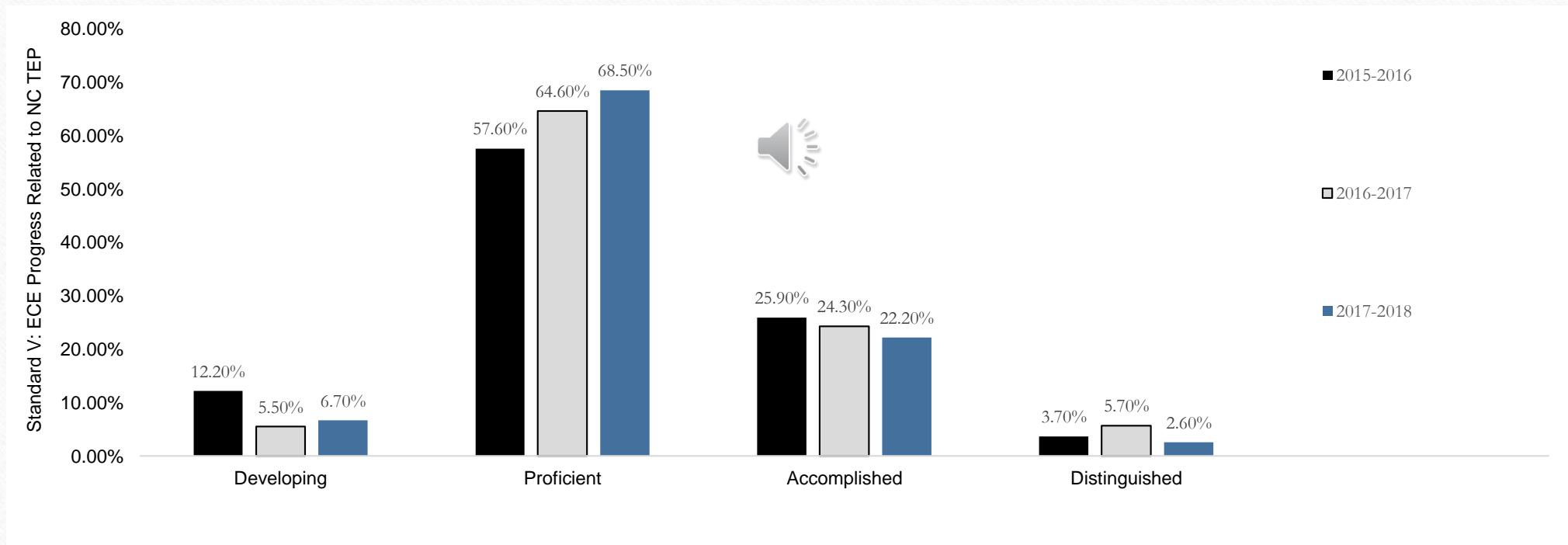


- Some need more guidance in using assessments.

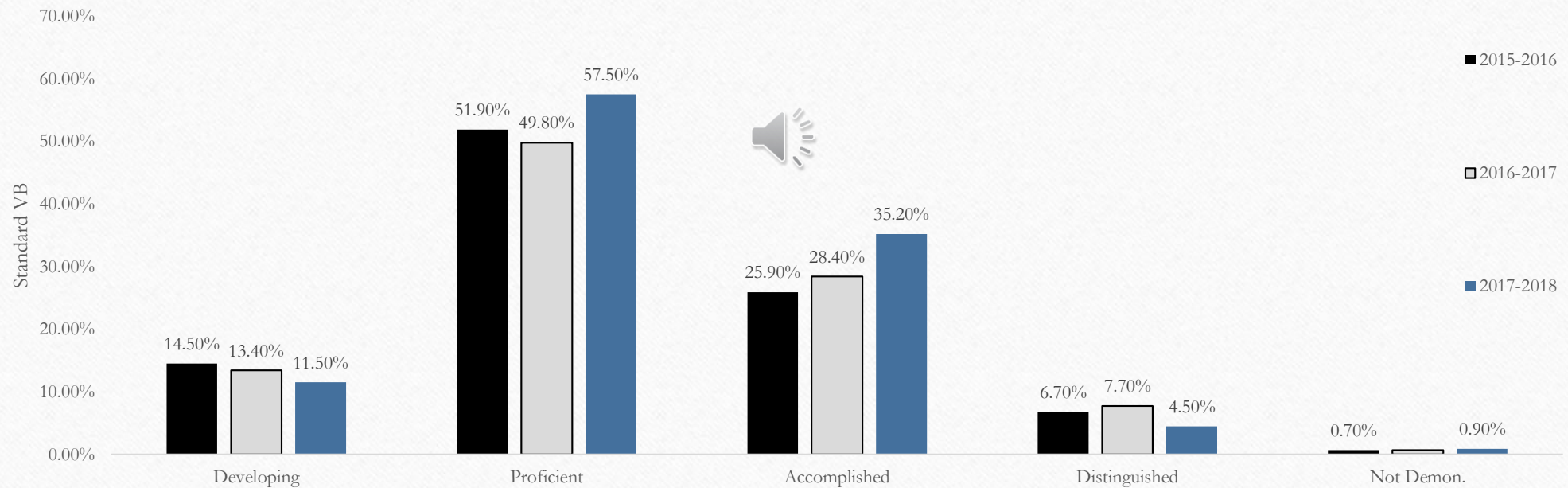
AND

- Some need more guidance meeting needs of children with various abilities.

Standard V: Teachers Reflect on their Practices



Standard VB: Teachers Link Professional Growth To Their Professional Goals



Survey Responses & Interviews

- Related to Standard VB - Survey respondents and ECEs who were interviewed indicated:
 - Nearly half of survey respondents said that they were in process of self-reflection, felt more confident in teaching.

AND

- Majority mentioned they would like to have more opportunities to participate in affordable PD and relevant training.

Qualitative Components

- Ethnomethodology was used as a basis for this study to describe the “ordinary lives” of ECEs and how perhaps, their lives aren’t ordinary at all.



- The teacher-student arrangement that occurs in public schools across the United States, may look quite different from those inclusive early childhood education classrooms who have ECEs serving as the lead teacher.

Qualitative Portions

- A large variety of factors impact the quality of teaching and learning in inclusive early childhood education settings (e.g., child and family characteristics, classroom environment/location, materials/resources available, quality of interactions) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Odom et al., 2004).

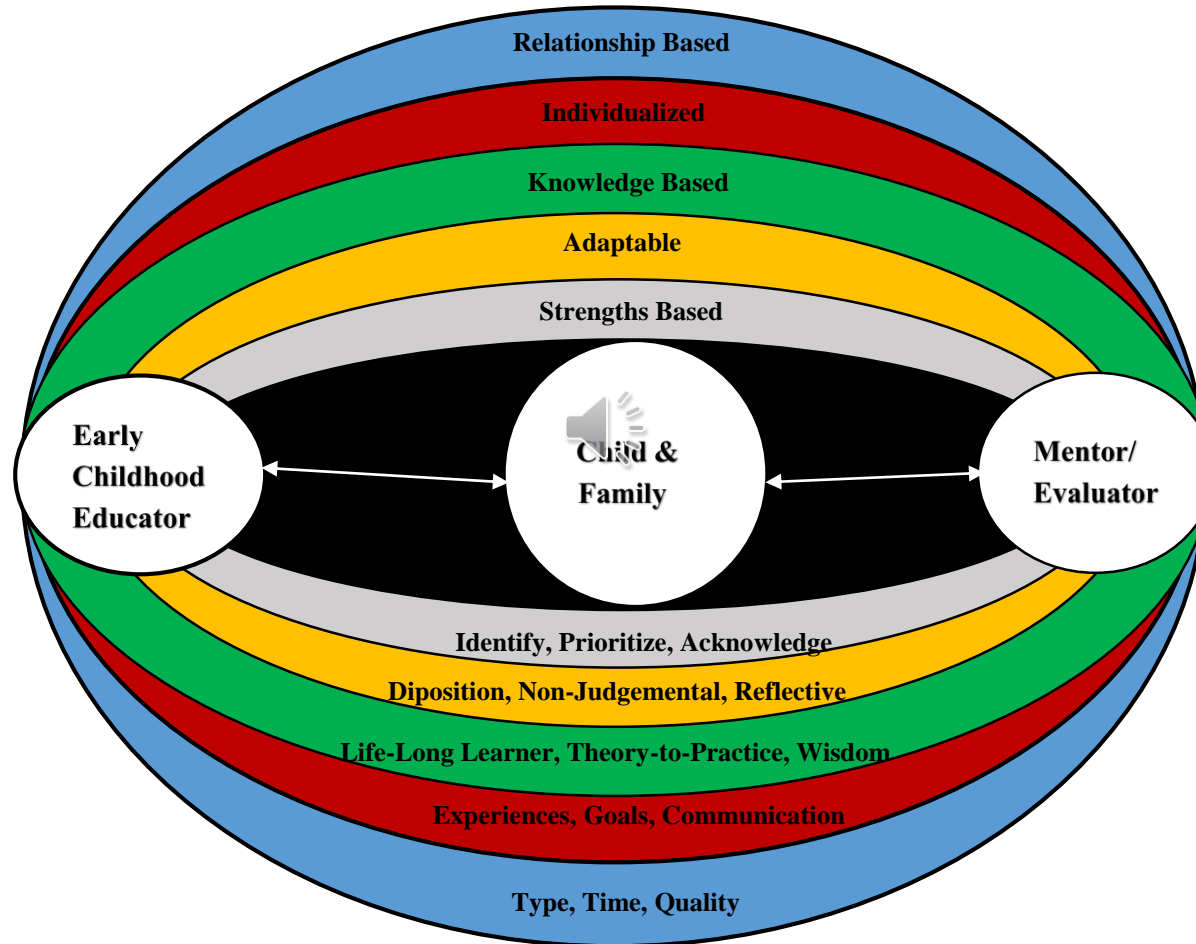


Figure 2: Concept Map of the “Ordinary Lives” of Early Childhood Educators: An Illustration of Shared Expertise, Experiences, and Supports that may Influence the Growth and Development of Young Children and Their Families (Taylor, 2018).

Qualitative Components

- Nonprobability, convenience sampling was used to recruit ECEs to participate in focus groups and individual interviews.



- Participants were contacted on multiple separate occasions during the recruitment phase (Dillman, 2007):
 - Flyer (Researcher contact information)
 - Information packet (cover letter, study abstract, RSVP)
 - Two electronic reminders (time, date, WebEx link and phone number)
 - Thank you letter

Qualitative Components

- A drawing was conducted for participation in focus groups and individual interviews (e.g., \$50.00 e-card to Target).

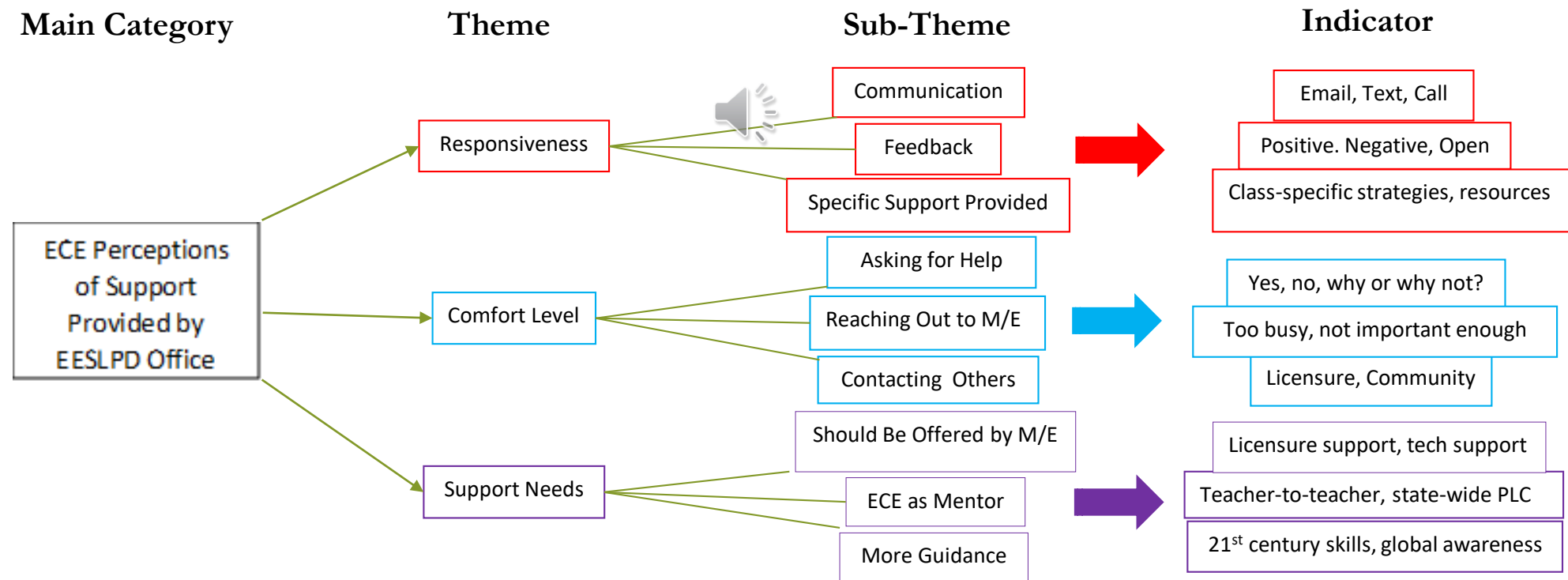


- Following implementation of the study, participants personal information was de-identified and no responses can be traced back to the individuals who participated.

Qualitative Components

- Information that participants shared is anonymous and confidential.
- This study and subsequent revisions were approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at UNC Charlotte.

Identified Themes: Derived from Semi-Structured Interview Questions



Theme One: Responsiveness

- **Sub-Theme: Communication**

Erica: “My evaluator is awesome and as I said I had the previous one that helped too. We usually email and text and she always says if I need extra time to talk to call her whenever. It’s been great. My evaluator always gets back to me within 24-48 hours. She’s been great.”

Theme One: Responsiveness

- **Sub-Theme: Feedback**

Ann: “My evaluator is very knowledgeable...but I kind of feel like she is a my way or the high way mentality, all black and white. And I think that part of being a good teacher is being creative and so sometimes I feel like if I don't do something exactly the way she would do it I'm going to get points deducted basically or I'm going to get penalized.”

Theme One: Responsiveness

- **Sub-Theme: Specific Support**

Ann: “My mentor has been has been easy to talk to and has been very responsive. I have had some difficulty talking...and getting responses from my B-K licensure consultant though. That’s been a real difficulty. My mentor’s helped me a lot with that so we can get some things accomplished.”

Theme Two: Comfort Level

- **Sub-Theme: Asking for Help**

Erica: [laughs] “I do not mind asking questions. I like knowing my job and knowing my role and I will keep reaching out until someone gives me an answer. When I first started in Pre-K, I didn’t want people to think that I didn’t know my job.”

Theme Two: Comfort Level

- **Sub-Theme: Reaching Out to M/E**

Ann: “My only concerns would be when reaching out to my mentor is that I know she is incredibly busy so unless it’s something really important I don’t want to bother her. But she’s made it clear that if I sent her an email she’ll respond to it as soon as she possible can and 9 times out of 10 she does but I know she is incredibly busy with all the work she has to do.”

Theme Two: Comfort Level

- **Sub-Theme: Contacting Others**

Lucy: I needed to join a committee, so she (mentor) helped me connect with the person who runs the Smart Start and all the resources she provided me were great.

Theme Three: Support Needs

- **Sub-Theme: Should be offered by Mentor/Evaluator**

CC: “It would be nice if they can get it clear and let your administrator know what the expectations are of the EESLPD, or of NC PreK for your classroom. I think a lot of the administrators still think it’s just daycare and they don’t realize that we are expected to do certain things and we need the time, and that support, materials, and resources for that.”

Theme Three: Support Needs

- **Sub-Theme: ECE as Mentor**

Erica: “I haven’t mentored yet because they had to put a substitute in my room. I did the training and I want to do it. It’s hard traveling across the county...not that I don’t love helping it’s just that’s extra money in her (Site Administrator’s) eyes...to put a sub in my class and then I’m not with my kids, ya know. We have a county-wide and a center-wide PLC and it helps us see that we are part of a whole and it would be even better if we had a state-wide PLC.”

Theme Three: Support Needs

- **Sub-Theme: More Guidance**

Ann: “I feel like I got thrown in without a handbook or anything, like I was just expected to know what to do. Not specifically from my mentor or evaluator but just from everyone. I guess I was just expected to know because I had a degree or something.”

Contributions

- In the effort to minimize the research-to-practice gap, links have been identified indicating that practitioners will implement evidence-based practices with high levels of self-efficacy, impacting confidence and competence, when a strong system of PD is provided (Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, 2015; Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010; Snyder, Hemmeter, Fox, 2015; Snyder, et al., 2012; Snyder, Hemmeter, & McLaughlin, 2011).

Contributions

- High-quality center-based Pre-K may lead to later school age adjustment as well as successful outcomes (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Early Child Care Research Network, 2003; Peisner-Feinberg & Burchinal, 1997).
- An increased interest in the professionalism of the early childhood workforce may in part, be attributed to findings from previous research that suggest that quality education and care may impact the academic outcomes of children at school-age (Buysse, Winton, & Rouse, 2009).

Contributions (cont.)

- Buysse, et al., 2009, developed a framework for the facilitation of high-quality PD for ECEs that focuses on three main components: (1) who, (2) what, and (3) how.



- Professional development that is ongoing, offers on-site guidance, and one-to-one support and offers training that meets the individual needs of the educator is necessary (Onchwari & Kenngwe, 2009).

Limitations

- Teachers must have been enrolled with the EESLPD and hold one of three types of licensure at the time of the study.



- Study only focused on NC Pre-K and with ECEs in nonpublic settings.
- Subjectivity and similarities were found between the researcher and the researched. The study may have been stronger if analysis was conducted with an additional researcher, or more.

Future Research


- Focus on particular areas of the rubric ECEs are needing improvement (e.g., meeting the needs of specific populations of children, specific ECE practices in relation to items on the evaluation instrument).
 - Example IID (Exploration of what specific areas teachers need guidance in meeting needs of children with various abilities).
 - Discover what resources are currently provided and/or needed to address these areas.



Future Research

- The best type or combination of PD should be explored and used with mentors/evaluators and ECEs (e.g., video recordings of classroom practices, reliability with marking ECEs using the rubric as part of the NC TEP, on-line and in-person learning modules).
- Interviews with Mentors/Evaluators

Implications for Practice

- Protocol/practice for co-observations to ensure reliability (certification process).
- Formal process of procedural fidelity. 
- Mentors/Evaluator to practice implicit and explicit modeling with ECEs they support.
- EESLPD guidance in particular rubric areas (e.g., diversity, technology, global awareness 21st century skills, diverse learners).

Implications for Practice (cont.)

- Clear communication on part of EESLPD in relation to ECE requirements.
- Better training for directors who serve as EESLPD evaluators.
- A system to help ECEs who are on the waiting list to receive mentorship opportunities and/or community-based, teacher-to-teacher support.

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