



Experiences with We Grow Together, a Professional Development System to Support Caregiver-Child Interactions for Infants and Toddlers

**ZERO TO THREE 2021**

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## Poll: Tell us about yourself

### / Please mark the roles that describe your work:

- Early childhood administrators
- Coaches or mentors
- Training and technical assistance providers
- Teachers/Caregivers
- Evaluators
- Researchers
- Higher education instructors
- Other



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## Overview

- / What do we know about professional development for infant and toddler caregivers
- / Video describing We Grow Together (WGT)
- / Description of the WGT 2018–2019 field test



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## Importance of professional development (PD) for infant-toddler caregivers

- / **Brain development is rapid in the first three years of life (IOM 2015). Early supportive interactions with adults are strongly related to later achievement and success** (Landry & Smith 2011; Suggate et al. 2018).
- / **Early childhood professionals need to understand how to promote young children's development and learning** (Hamre et al. 2012; IOM 2015).
- / **Those caring for infants and toddlers often have less access to PD** (Snyder et al. 2012; Ochsborn 2011).



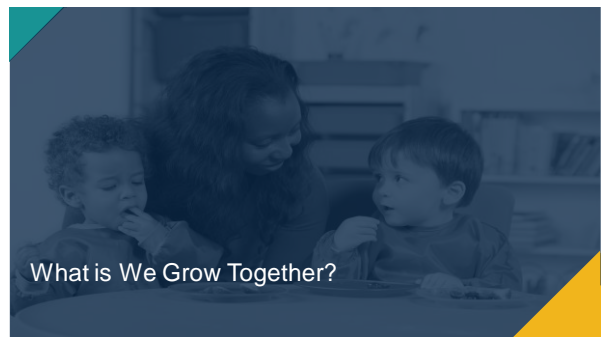
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## Coaching and professional development (PD)

- / **Coaching is most effective when it is sustained, actively engages caregivers, and emphasizes respectful coach-caregiver relationships.**
- / **PD strategies include:**
  - Building trusting relationships
  - Goal setting
  - Practice
  - Frequent feedback
  - Modeling
  - Active learning
  - Self-reflection
  - Coaching based on video-recorded practice and quality observations



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## We Grow Together (WGT)

- / PD system for caregivers working with infants and toddlers in center-based care and family child care homes
- / Relationship-based coaching from a trained local PD provider
- / Training and materials for PD providers to help them mentor caregivers and implement WGT



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## Quality of Caregiver-Child Interactions for Infants and Toddlers (Q-CCIT) observational tool

- / The Q-CCIT observational tool focuses on high quality caregiver-child interactions that support
  - Social-emotional development
  - Language and literacy
  - Cognitive development



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## The We Grow Together Professional Development System



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## WGT field test implementation

- / Caregivers and PD providers worked together using the We Grow Together resources for up to 4 months.



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## Poll: Have you ever participated in professional development that had similar resources to We Grow Together?

- / Which of these have you done in professional development?

### Mark all that apply

- Used online resources
- Worked with a coach
- Developed goals (e.g., goal setting, SMART goals)
- Made action plans
- Engaged in self-reflection using video
- Tracked child progress in response to a new teaching strategy



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## WGT orientation and supports

- / PD provider
  - Remote PD provider training
  - PD provider guide and tools
  - Website navigation support
  - Technical assistance: Phone, email, office hours
  - Online discussion boards
  - PD provider optional webinars
- / Caregivers
  - Website navigation support
  - Technical assistance: Phone, email
  - Online discussion boards
  - For the field test, iPads (web access and self-recording)



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## Field test data collection

### / Data collection was before, during, and after WGT implementation

- Q-CCIT observations (fall 2018 and spring 2019)
  - o Caregiver practices
- Surveys (fall 2018 and spring 2019)
  - o PD experiences
  - o Knowledge and beliefs about caregiving and PD practices
- Web-data (during field test)
  - o Time spent on WGT website and pages accessed



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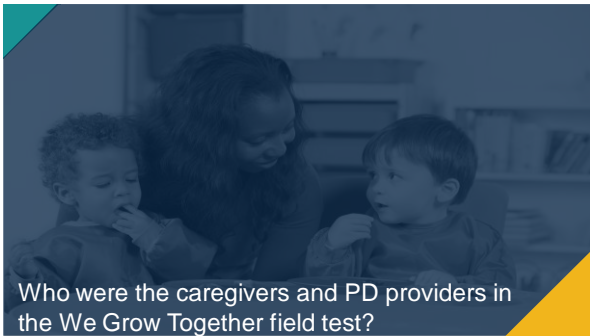
## Poll: What types of early care and education settings are you interested in?

### Select all that apply:

- / Center-based infant classrooms
- / Center-based toddler classrooms
- / Family child care (FCC) homes
- / Early Head Start



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Who were the caregivers and PD providers in the We Grow Together field test?

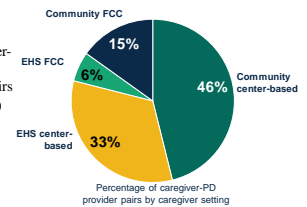
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## Who were the participants?

### / 271 caregivers and 168 PD providers:

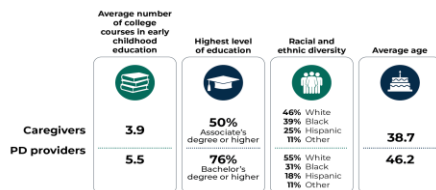
- 89 Early Head Start (EHS) center-based pairs
- 125 community center-based pairs
- 16 EHS family child care (FCC) pairs
- 41 community FCC pairs

### / 10 different geographic areas



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## Who were the participants? (continued)



Source: Fall 2018 WGT Background Surveys and Spring 2019 Feedback Surveys.



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## PD Providers

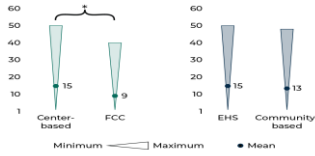
- / Most received reflective supervision (65.2 percent) within the last year
- / Most were members of a PD provider support network (74.4 percent)
- / Six out of every 10 PD providers (59.2 percent) were internal coaches in their setting

Source: Fall 2018 WGT PD Provider and Caregiver Background Surveys.



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Outside of We Grow Together, PD providers worked with an average of 13–14 caregivers



In the chat, case load is: High, Low, or Expected



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What types of relationships did caregivers have with their PD providers before participating in the We Grow Together field test (fall 2018)?

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Existing caregiver-PD provider relationships

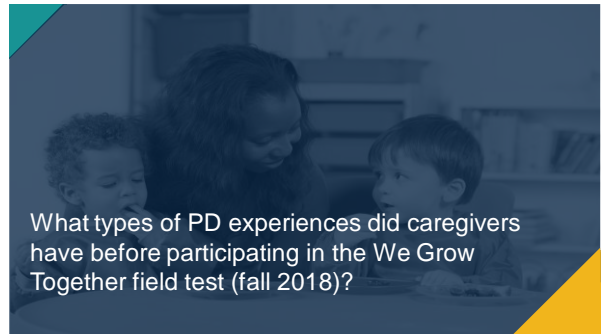
- / Worked together for about 4.6 years
- / A higher percentage of Early Head Start (EHS) caregivers reported having a mentor, coach, or other PD provider before the WGT field test than did community-based caregivers



Source: Fall 2018 WGT PD Provider and Caregiver Background Surveys.



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What types of PD experiences did caregivers have before participating in the We Grow Together field test (fall 2018)?

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Caregivers reported varied professional development activities

- / Caregivers reported receiving training on a range of teaching strategy topics in the previous year – an average of 2.8 out of 7 topics
  - For example, strategies and activities to support early learning in math and science
- / EHS caregivers reported receiving training on more teaching strategy topics than community-based caregivers



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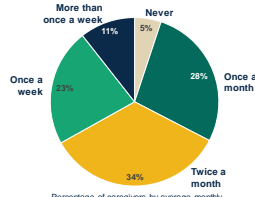


What types of PD experiences did participants have during the We Grow Together field test?

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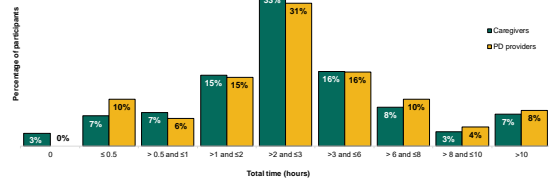
### How often did PD providers and caregivers communicate about their practice?

- / Most pairs met more than once a month, including both in-person and virtual meetings
- / Five percent of caregivers reported never meeting with their PD provider about WGT



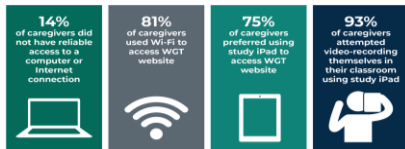
Source: Spring 2019 WGT Caregiver Feedback Surveys.

### How much time did PD providers and caregivers spend on the WGT website?



Source: WGT Website Analytics.

### How did caregivers engage with technology?

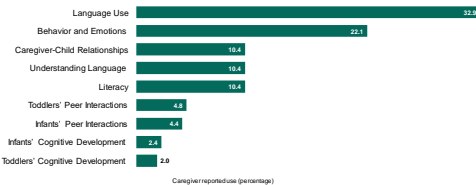


Source: Spring 2019 WGT Caregiver Feedback Surveys.

### Poll: Where would you prefer to spend the most time?

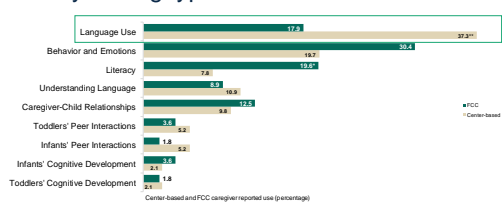
- / If you were using the We Grow Together resources, where would you prefer to spend the most time?
- / Mark only one:
  - Support children's language use
  - Regulation of behavior and emotions
  - Caregiver-child relationships
  - Support children's understanding of language
  - Support literacy
  - Support peer interactions
  - Support cognitive development (thinking and learning)

### Which WGT modules were most frequently used?



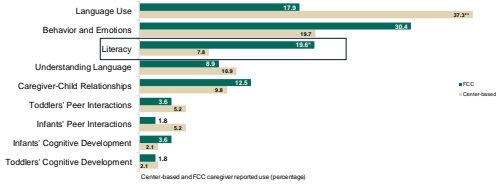
Source: Spring 2019 WGT Caregiver Feedback Surveys.

### Which WGT modules were most frequently used by setting type?



Source: Spring 2019 WGT Caregiver Feedback Surveys.

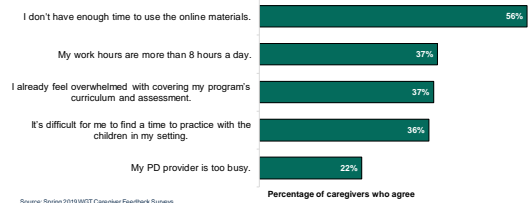
### Which WGT modules were most frequently used by setting type?



Source: Spring 2019 WGT Caregiver Feedback Surveys.  
 Mathematica We Grow Together OPRE

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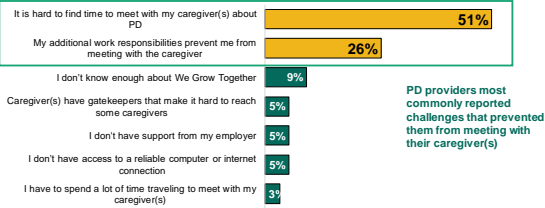
### What were caregivers' top challenges using We Grow Together?



Source: Spring 2019 WGT Caregiver Feedback Surveys.  
 Mathematica We Grow Together OPRE

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### What were PD providers' top coaching challenges?



PD providers most commonly reported challenges that prevented them from meeting with their caregiver(s)

Source: Spring 2019 WGT PD Provider Feedback Surveys.  
 Mathematica We Grow Together OPRE

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### In the chat...

In the chat, please tell us if these challenges are what you would expect or tell us what additional challenges you have experienced?

Mathematica We Grow Together OPRE

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How do caregivers describe their relationship with their PD provider after We Grow Together (spring 2019)?

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### What were caregiver-PD provider relationships like after WGT?

- / Caregivers reported it was usually true that their PD provider was someone...
  - Who showed them respect (mean rating of 3.9 on a 4-point scale)
  - Whom they trusted (mean rating of 3.8)
  - With whom they felt comfortable asking questions regarding things about which they were unsure (mean rating of 3.8)
- / Caregivers also reported working collaboratively with their PD providers
- / They set goals but didn't necessarily use a framework

Source: WGT Caregiver Feedback survey.  
 Mathematica We Grow Together OPRE

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### Caregivers who reported having a previous coaching relationship with their PD provider reported having a more positive goal-setting experience



Source: Spring 2019 WGT Caregiver Feedback Survey  
 Mathemática We Grow Together OPRE

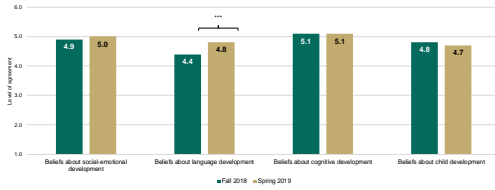
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Were there differences in caregivers' knowledge and beliefs about caregiving and development after participating in We Grow Together?

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### Were there differences in caregivers' knowledge and beliefs about caregiving and development after We Grow Together?



Source: Fall 2018 WGT Caregiver Background Survey, Spring 2019 WGT Caregiver Feedback Survey  
 Mathemática We Grow Together OPRE

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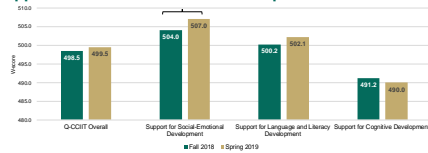


Were there differences in caregivers' interactions with infants and toddlers after participating in We Grow Together?

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### Was there a change in observed quality of caregiver child interactions?

Caregivers scored significantly higher in spring in the Q-CCIT Support for Social-Emotional Development domain

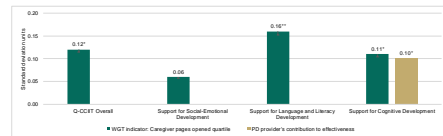


Source: Fall and Spring WGT Q-CCIT observations (unadjusted W-6 core comparisons)  
 Mathemática We Grow Together OPRE

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### Change in practice associated with the use of WGT

- Web-data was significantly associated with spring total Q-CCIT scores, Support for Language and Literacy, and Support for Cognitive Development.
- Caregivers who reported that their provider supported their efficacy made greater gains in supporting cognitive development



Note: Models were estimated with full information maximum likelihood. Covariates include the fall score of the respective outcome, weeks between WGT start and spring observation, caregiver education level, experience/ECE, Knowledge score, whether classroom served toddlers, class/group size, caregiver child ratio, ECE setting type, caregiver report of PD provider contribution to professional effectiveness, PD provider is a supervisor, and PD provider dosage. \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001.

Mathemática We Grow Together OPRE

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## Frequent communication

- / Encouraged frequent communication and nudges
- / More frequent communication between caregivers and PD Providers was positively associated with change in:
  - Q-CCIT domains
  - Satisfaction with caregiver-PD provider relationships

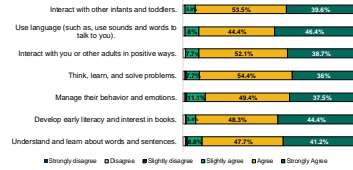
Source: Spring 2019 WGT Caregiver Feedback Surveys and Q-CCIT scores



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## Caregivers' report of how WGT practices help children in their classroom

- / More than 98 percent of caregivers, overall and across different settings and different WGT practices, reported that using the WGT practices helped infants and toddlers



Source: Spring 2019 WGT Caregiver Feedback Surveys



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## Key takeaways

- / Caregivers reported that We Grow Together benefited them and the children in their care
- / Caregivers had positive relationships with their PD Providers
- / Caregivers' beliefs about language development changed from fall to spring
- / We Grow Together has evidence that it can support change in practice as measured by Q-CCIT
- / More frequent communication between caregivers and PD Providers was positively associated with change in each of the Q-CCIT domains and satisfaction with relationships
- / Time was the greatest implementation challenge for caregivers and PD providers



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## Appreciation

- / Caregivers, PD providers, and early childhood settings who participated in We Grow Together
- / Our expert panel and partners (ZERO TO THREE and University of Oklahoma)
- / Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (ACF)



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## Word cloud

Instruction: Please go to the Menti site and enter one word to describe your reaction to what you heard today  
[www.menti.com](http://www.menti.com)



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## Contact us

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  - Project web page: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/professional-development-tools-to-improve-the-quality-of-infant-toddler-care-q-ccit-pd-tools>



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## Discussion

/ What are your questions for us?

