



Flamingo Early Learning Florida

Impact Report 2016–2020



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UF | Lastinger Center for Learning
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

A strong foundation in a child's early years is life changing. High-quality care from skilled educators profoundly impacts children's development, and is critical for success in school, work, and life. Developed and launched in 2015 in partnership with Florida's Office of Early Learning, Flamingo Early Learning Florida is a dynamic system designed to significantly increase access to professional development that builds the knowledge and competencies of early childhood educators to provide high-quality care and instruction to Florida's young children.

Flamingo Early Learning Florida offers **900 hours** of high-quality, research-based content across 45 instructor-led, online courses (34 in English and 11 in Spanish) designed to improve teaching practices. Courses are job-embedded, mastery-based, standards-aligned, and build knowledge and skills through applicable content and strategies.

From 2016–2020, infant, toddler, and preschool educators working in centers, schools, and family childcare homes enrolled in 25,003 courses, with **18,561 courses completed**, for a **retention rate of 74%**. Educators participated in courses from all over the state, representing 66 of Florida's 67 counties.

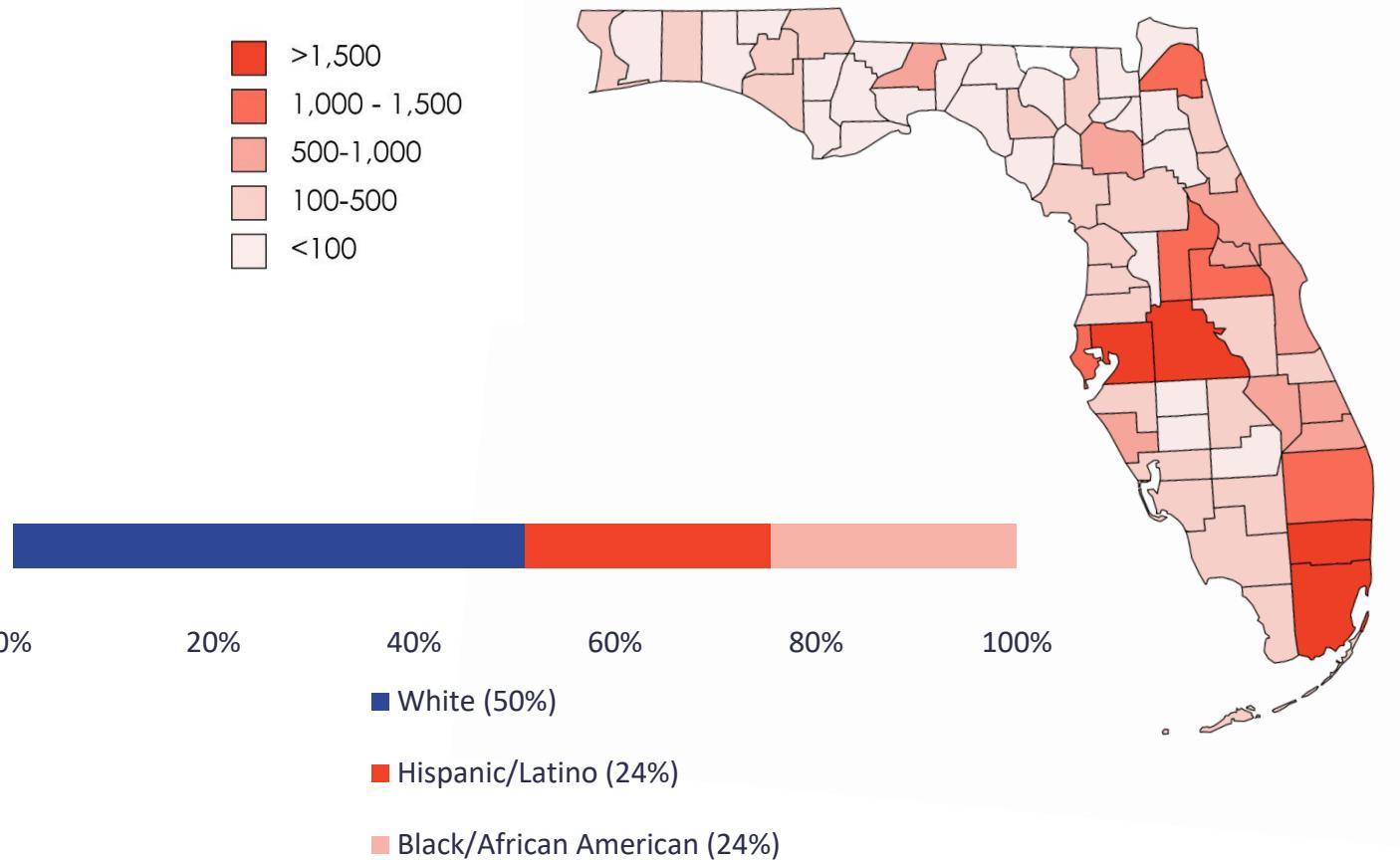
Before and after each course, educators completed assessments of knowledge, which provided evidence of impact. Across all courses since 2016, **educators' knowledge grew by over 50%**, with an effect size of 1.23, representing a large effect.

Mastery of a course was defined, among other criteria, as achieving 80% on the knowledge posttest. Mastery levels increased significantly after completing course content: Less than 20% of educators achieved mastery at pretest whereas **70% displayed mastery at posttest**. This report describes Flamingo Early Learning Florida and its impacts, also describing the educators who enrolled in courses and their perceptions of their experiences.

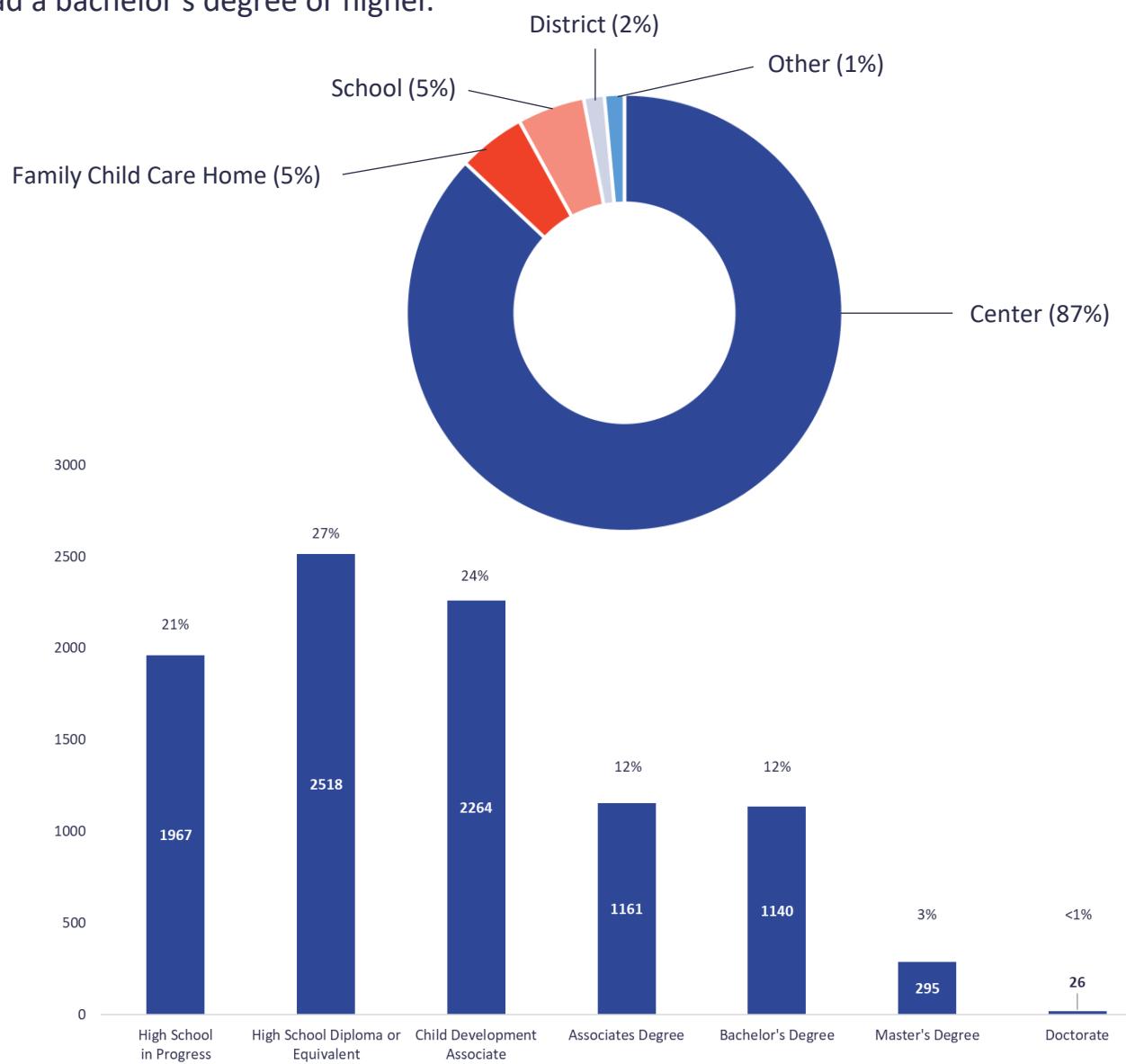


Since 2016, **13,960** educators in **66 Florida counties** enrolled in one or more Flamingo Early Learning Florida course. The map below displays the number of course enrollments by county. Miami-Dade, Polk, Hillsborough, and Broward counties had the largest numbers of course enrollments, with Miami-Dade and Polk counties both exceeding 2,000.

Participating educators primarily spoke English (80%), followed by Spanish (18%), with approximately 1% of educators reportedly speaking another language, such as Haitian Creole. Of the 65% of educators who responded about their race and ethnicity, half were White, 24% were Black/African American, 24% were Hispanic/Latino, and 1% or less identified as either Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American, or multiracial.

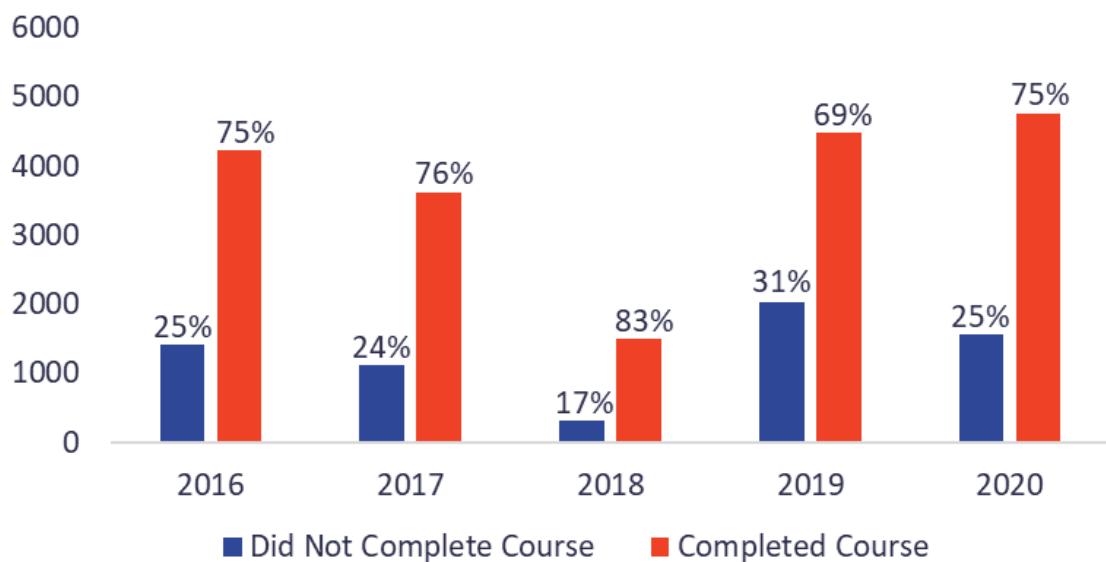
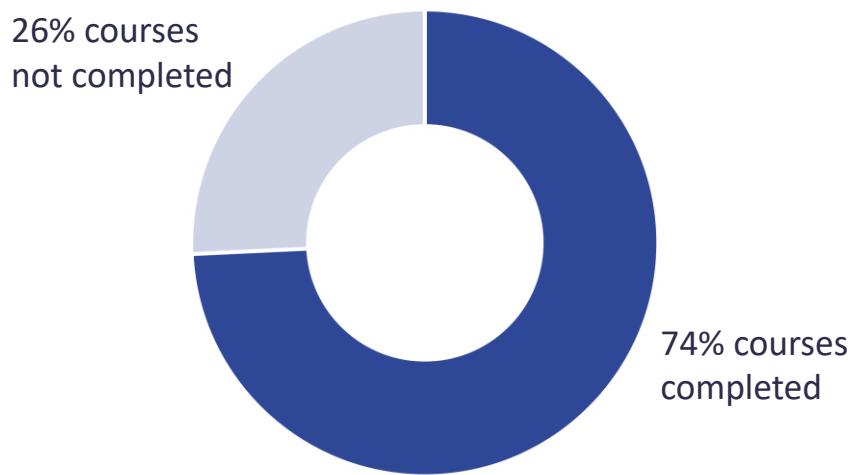


The majority of educators who completed Flamingo Early Learning Courses worked in center-based early childhood education programs (87%), although some educators reported working in family childcare homes, schools, and districts. When surveyed about their highest education level, 21% of educators had not yet graduated from high school, 27% had a high school diploma or equivalent, 37% had an associate's degree (including 24% with a Child Development Associate, or CDA), and 16% had a bachelor's degree or higher.



Course Completion

From 2016–2020, educators enrolled in **25,003** Flamingo Early Learning Florida courses, with an overall completion rate of 74% (18,561 completed courses). Completion rates remained relatively consistent from year to year. Notably, educators enrolled in over 4,700 Flamingo Early Learning Florida courses in 2020 and maintained a 75% completion rate, even in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. This record enrollment highlights early childhood educators' desire to continue improving their skills and competencies as well as the benefit of offering accessible and interactive online courses.



Preliminary analyses of the pretest and posttest data from the **18,561** completed courses showed that educators made large growth in their knowledge of key early learning concepts and practices. As shown in Table 1, educators' average knowledge gain across all years and courses was nearly 19 points. Their normalized gain (gains relative to the highest possible gain) was 51%, and Cohen's d (effect size) was 1.23, representing a large effect. The number of educators achieving mastery (assessment score above 80%) increased from less than 20% at pretest to 70% at posttest. Overall, educators scored an average of 82% on posttest across all courses.

+19

points gained

51%

normalized gain

1.23

effect size

Table 1. Course sample sizes, means, standard deviations, mastery, gains, and effect sizes

	Sample	Pre-assessment			Post-assessment			Gain	Effect size
		<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	% > 80%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
2016	4224	59.00	18.40	15.08	81.30	13.48	65.86	22.30	1.35
2017	3618	61.17	16.49	15.17	80.16	13.39	60.03	18.99	1.12
2018	1495	62.65	17.04	18.56	80.83	14.26	65.48	18.18	1.25
2019	4480	65.49	16.08	23.59	83.38	11.12	87.61	17.89	1.15
2020	4744	66.76	14.99	24.18	82.35	12.44	72.03	15.60	1.27
<i>Across All Years</i>	<i>N = 18,561</i>	63.01	16.60	19.32	81.60	12.94	70.20	18.59	1.23

After completing a Flamingo Early Learning Florida course, educators were asked to provide feedback to help inform necessary improvements and ensure continued system quality and effectiveness. Surveys yielded data from 1,254 educators on Flamingo Early Learning Florida's four most widely-used courses: *Designing Infant and Toddler Learning Environments*; *Act 1: Getting Organized for Learning in Preschool*; *Preschool Growth and Development: Maximizing Learning Experiences*; and *Guiding Preschool Behavior and Building Classroom*.

Feedback surveys asked educators to provide a rating response ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) on 18 items, such as the helpfulness of instructor's teaching strategies in obtaining the course learning objectives and the daily use of teaching strategies learned and practiced in the course with children enrolled in their early learning program. On average, educators rated the courses a score of 4.6, signifying that they "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that the courses were beneficial.

Regardless of their level of teaching experience, educators reported acquiring and implementing new strategies in the classroom to engage and excite their students. They reported that the courses provided content that was well-structured, concise, and effective, with prompt and constructive feedback from the instructor. Educators said they were challenged by the content and tools, which helped them practice new skills in the classroom and would highly recommend the courses to other early childhood educators. Direct quotes from educators are represented on page 7.

On average, educators rated the courses a 4.6 out of 5 possible points, signifying they "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that the courses were beneficial.

“The course was easy to understand and comprehend. I learned a lot using the strategies in the course. It really helps with the changes you want to make in your own classroom. I would recommend that all childcare providers take this course.” (Course: Designing Infant and Toddler Learning Environments)

“I learned so much by taking this course. I have been in the classroom for over 30 years, but I still found so much in this class that helps me be a better teacher.” (Course: Act 1: Getting Organized for Learning in Preschool)

“The course is very instructive and entertaining. It gives me a lot of strategies, fundamental activities, and important tools to apply in my classroom. I think that my class will be more dynamic. Students will have more fun while they are learning.” (Course: Preschool Growth and Development: Maximizing Learning Experiences)

“I found the course to be exceptionally well structured and filled with excellent suggestions to improve my teaching practice. It was both challenging and satisfying to work just beyond my comfort zone. My instructor always responded promptly to my posts.” (Course: Preschool Growth and Development: Maximizing Learning Experiences)

“I would just like to say that as a preschool teacher who is not college educated, this course really gave me a lot of information I can definitely use in my classroom next year to make positive changes.” (Course: Guiding Preschool Behavior and Building Classroom)

“I learned a lot from this class. We are using a lot of the strategies I learned in the classrooms now. This is by far one of the best classes I have taken.” (Course: Guiding Preschool Behavior and Building Classroom)