



Sing.



Play.



Love.®

Early Research Findings

THE SING.PLAY.LOVE.® PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

SING.PLAY.LOVE.® is an outcomes-based resource program that supports early childhood professionals in preparing young children for kindergarten readiness and school success. The program utilizes songs, picture books, play-based learning activities and music videos to engage children one to six years of age in mastering the skills they need for language, literacy and social-emotional development. The focus is on learning within loving relationships between caring adults and young children. Instructional strategies and materials to engage family members as teaching partners are also fundamental to the program.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. We believe **music is a powerful tool for teaching important early learning skills.** Music is fun, it's engaging, and a preferred way of learning for most young children.
2. We also believe that **teachers and families can work together as a team to teach** their young children important skills and content. This program provides great ways to partner with parents, including the **PLAY & LEARN** pages, music videos for families, song-only videos and student readers for home use.

OUR PROGRAM GOALS

Our program goals are:

1. To equip **children** with the social and emotional skills that predict school success.
2. To teach **children** to love learning, while mastering essential skills for language, literacy and math.
3. To engage **families** in supporting early learning, as they enhance the parent-child bond.
4. To provide **early childhood professionals** with instructional support, allowing them to creatively engage children in their own education.

EARLY RESEARCH FINDINGS

Two pilot research studies were completed to examine the effect of the **SING.PLAY.LOVE.**[®] program on: 1) student achievement; and 2) teacher behaviors impacting classroom quality.

PILOT STUDY ONE

A Head Start program in an urban school district serving young children three to five years of age participated in a one-year pilot implementation of the **SING.PLAY.LOVE.**[®] program. The purpose of the study was to gather preliminary information for measuring the impact of a music-based instructional program.

Two outcomes were identified for observation:

1. **CHILD OUTCOME:** To equip children with the social and emotional skills that predict school success.
2. **TEACHER OUTCOME:** To provide early childhood professionals with materials and instructional supports, allowing them to creatively engage children in whole-group instruction.

Child outcomes. The *Creative Curriculum for Preschool* was routinely utilized in all of the Head Start program's classrooms in the school district, along with the corresponding *Teaching Strategies GOLD (GOLD)* assessment system. The *GOLD* system is comprised of 38 objectives for early learning, including three objectives for social-emotional development.

Teachers assessed individual student progress three times per year by completing a *GOLD* scoring rubric for each of the 38 learning objectives. The assessment scores for objectives within the social-emotional domain were utilized to compare annual progress of students.

Over 900 students participated in the study. Of those, 600 participated in the **SING.PLAY.LOVE.**[®] program and 300 were engaged in other instructional activities provided by the Head Start program.

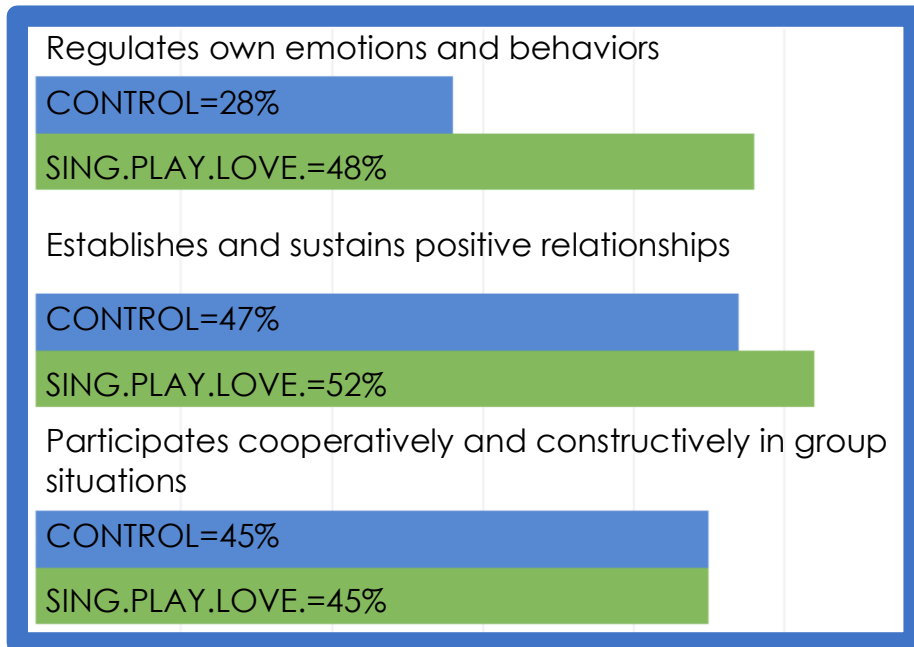
Results strongly suggested that students in the **SING.PLAY.LOVE.**[®] group showed greater progress in the areas of:

- Regulates own emotions and behaviors
- Establishes and sustains positive relationships

It appears that students in both groups made progress in “participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations” (Graph 1).

The anecdotal evidence from individual teachers regarding developmental benefits of the program for individual students was also powerful and encouraging. Many of those stories have been archived on videotape. www.vimeo.com/singplaylove/oneminute

Graph 1. Comparison of average progress scores for social-emotional learner outcomes of preschoolers



Teacher outcomes. The *Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)* was routinely completed for each teacher in all Head Start classrooms in the school district. The *CLASS* is an observation instrument used to assess the quality of teacher-child interactions that support learning and development. There are eight domains that capture specific information about teachers' interactions with children. The investigators targeted five of the eight dimensions that could be the most relevant for teacher participation in the study.

Head Start administrators and instructional coaches assessed individual teacher progress two times per year. Trained observers first watched individual teachers provide instruction in their classrooms, and then utilized a *CLASS* scoring rubric to assign numerical ratings for each *CLASS* dimension. These numerical scores were utilized to compare progress of teachers on targeted dimensions for one school year.

The targeted dimensions were:

1. Positive climate – the overall emotional tone of the classroom and the connection between teachers and students
2. Teacher sensitivity – teachers' responsivity to students' needs and awareness of students' level of academic and emotional functioning
3. Behavior management – teacher's ability to use effective methods to prevent and redirect misbehavior
4. Productivity – how well teachers manage instructional time and routines so that students have the maximum number of opportunities to learn
5. Instructional learning format – the degree to which teachers maximize students' engagement and ability to learn by providing interesting activities, instruction, centers, and materials

Over 100 of the school district's Head Start teachers participated in the study. Of those, 50 participated in the **SING.PLAY.LOVE.**[®] program and 50 were engaged in other professional development and curricular activities provided by the Head Start program.

The collected data suggested that teachers participating in the **SING.PLAY.LOVE.**[®] program made statistically significant improvements on the *CLASS* "instructional learning format" dimension ($p < .05$). This is an exciting finding, as a teacher's ability to "actively engage children in activities to encourage participation and expand involvement" is a critical instructional skill.

One-hundred percent of teachers completing a post-study survey reported a positive increase in their attitudes and skills specific to whole-group instruction as a result of their participation in the **SING.PLAY.LOVE.**[®] program.

On the basis of the information gathered, the anecdotal data and classroom observations, the program was adopted across the district's Head Start program.

An anecdotal account describing the benefits of the **SING.PLAY.LOVE.**[®] program for teachers and students participating in the pilot study is provided here:

"As an early childhood instructional coach [XYZ] school district, I witnessed firsthand the captivating effects of **SING.PLAY.LOVE.**[®] on students and teachers.

SING.PLAY.LOVE.[®] *is equal parts music and magic.*

The **SING.PLAY.LOVE.**[®] program, the professional development from the creator herself, the songs, books, videos, supplemental pre-made and ready-to-go materials, combined with the intentional teaching of specific early learning skills, has been enthusiastically embraced and greatly appreciated by teachers in our district.

SING.PLAY.LOVE.[®] is a gift that reinforces the consistent and positive message that every student is a capable and competent learner. **SING.PLAY.LOVE.**[®] is unifying, calming and contributes to a positive, predictable and safe environment where every child can participate and be successful. Children who are non-verbal, English language learners, or typically developing...all can participate in singing, motor interaction and dancing. The measurable benefits are worth noting; however, when you add the JOY from **SING.PLAY.LOVE.**[®], real magic happens.

It has been amazing and inspiring to watch the effects of **SING.PLAY.LOVE.**[®] on teacher's instructional practices as well as on children's behavior and overall engagement in whole-group instruction. **SING.PLAY.LOVE.**[®] provides teachers with specific strategies and supports to intentionally teach the critical skills needed for life. I saw joy return to teachers' and children's faces. After every **SING.PLAY.LOVE.**[®] song is sung, a child will say, "I love that song" or "That's my favorite song!" **SING.PLAY.LOVE.**[®] sets the classroom tone for the day, and for the year. The *BEE-ING ME* book is a perfect fit for overall classroom management, with a repeating reminder to "be safe, be respectful, be responsible." No other rules are necessary, and everyone can easily remember these expectations.

If our goals are to ignite the love of learning in early childhood, implementing the **SING.PLAY.LOVE.**[®] program is a golden ticket. **SING.PLAY.LOVE.**[®] is a natural fit in our district early childhood programs as it embraces, teaches and reinforces the social emotional skills our students need to be successful in school and in life. **SING.PLAY.LOVE.**[®] elicits joy and joy belongs in the early childhood classroom."

- Instructional Coach

PILOT STUDY TWO

In a second pilot study, A Head Start program in an urban school district serving young children three to five years of age participated in a one-year pilot implementation of the **SING.PLAY.LOVE.**[®] program. The purpose of the implementation was to gather information for measuring the impact of a music-based instructional program. In the second study, the investigators expanded the scope of objectives for development and learning to include math, cognition, and literacy in addition to social-emotional learning.

The objectives were:

1. MATH: uses number concepts and operations – counts
2. MATH: uses number concepts and operations – quantifies
3. COGNITIVE: Uses classification skills
4. LITERACY: demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet - identifies and names letters
5. LITERACY: demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet – uses letter-sound knowledge
6. SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL: regulates own emotions and behaviors – manages feelings
7. SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL: Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations – balances needs and rights of self and others

The *Creative Curriculum for Preschool* was routinely utilized in all of the Head Start program's classrooms in the school district, along with the corresponding *Teaching Strategies GOLD (GOLD)* assessment system. The *GOLD* system is comprised of 38 objectives for early learning. The investigators targeted seven of the 38 learning objectives that could be the most relevant for student participation in the study.

Teachers assessed individual student progress three times per year by completing a *GOLD* scoring rubric for each of the 38 learning objectives. Assessment scores for objectives within the math, cognitive, literacy and social-emotional domains were utilized to compare annual progress of students. The investigators targeted seven of the 38 objectives for development and learning that could be the most relevant for student participation in the study.

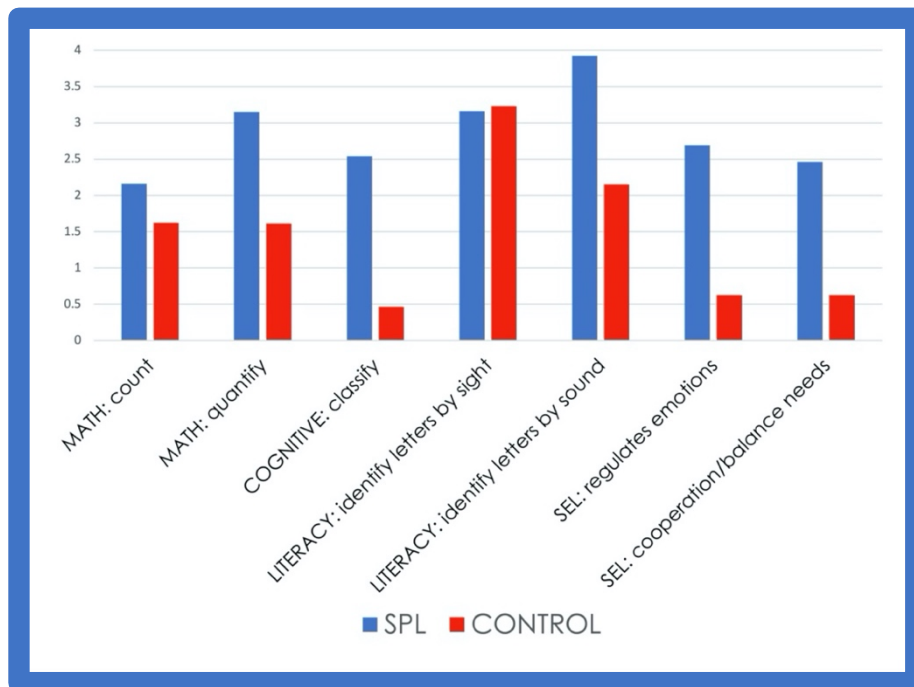
Over 50 students participated in the study. Of those, 25 participated in the **SING.PLAY.LOVE.**[®] program and 25 were engaged in other instructional activities provided by the Head Start program.

The bar graph below (Graph 2) illustrates average scores on the seven objectives for the two groups.

A statistical test suggested significant gains in the following skills:

- LITERACY: demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet – uses letter-sound knowledge ($p < .05$)
- SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL: regulates own emotions and behaviors – manages feelings ($p < .0001$)
- SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL: participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations – balances needs and rights of self and others ($p < .05$)
- COMPOSITE: sum of scores for seven skills ($p < .05$)

Graph 2. Comparison of average achievement scores for math, cognitive, literacy, and social emotional learning of preschoolers

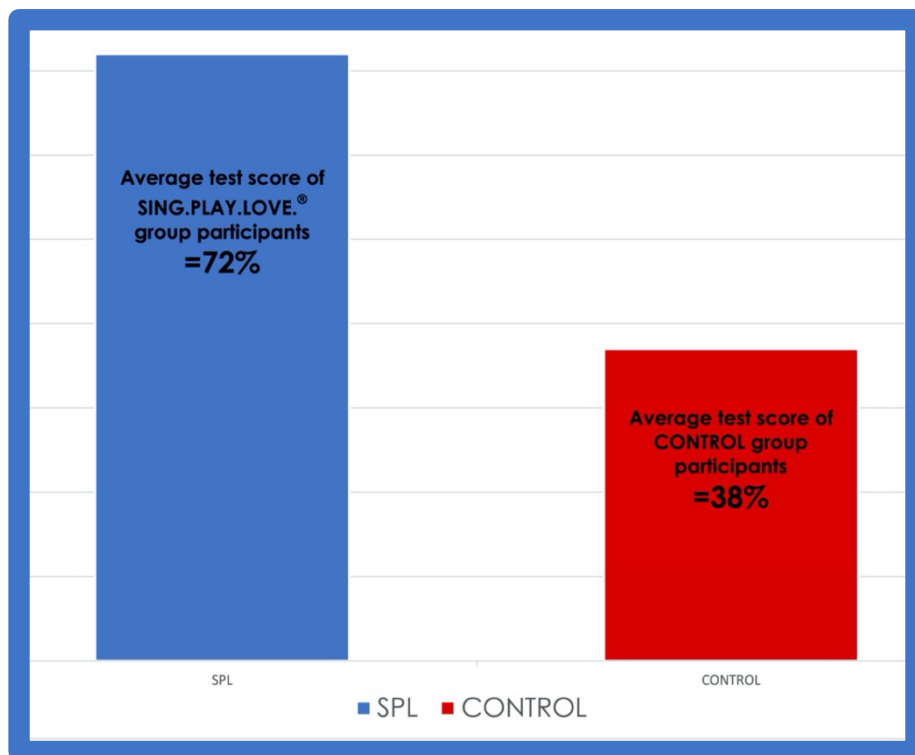


Results suggest that students in the **SING.PLAY.LOVE.**[®] group showed greater progress for these skills:

- MATH: uses number concepts and operations – counts
- MATH: uses number concepts and operations – quantifies
- COGNITIVE: Uses classification skills
- LITERACY: demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet – uses letter-sound knowledge
- SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL: regulates own emotions and behaviors – manages feelings
- SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL: Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations – balances needs and rights of self and others

The bar graph below (Graph 3) provides a comparison of average scores for the **SING.PLAY.LOVE.**[®] and comparison groups on the sum of the seven targeted skills. It is interesting to note that the **SING.PLAY.LOVE.**[®] group made nearly twice the progress of the comparison group.

Graph 3. Comparison of average achievement scores for sum of development outcomes of preschoolers



It is the hope of the investigators that more sophisticated research will be done to measure the effects of the **SING.PLAY.LOVE.**[®] program. However, the results were exciting and documented significant benefits of the **SING.PLAY.LOVE.**[®] for improving learning outcomes of young children.