



# Oakland Starting Smart & Strong

## Resilient Oakland Communities and Kids (ROCK) Evaluation Report 2019-2020

### Summary



\*For the complete report with all attachments [click here](#).

## Acknowledgements

The ROCK community is a diverse and dynamic group of individuals, schools and agencies working in partnership and committed to a vision of love, support and thrivance for all of Oakland's youngest children, their parents and families and the workforce serving them. ROCK is the result of the collective voices, courage, generosity, persistence, care, creativity, actions and in the words of Dr. Bettina Love<sup>1</sup>—"freedom dreaming"—of so many who have chosen to stay engaged in this complex, urgent and essential long term work. We want to express our sincere gratitude to our valued leadership team and partners in the ROCK community:

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<sup>1</sup> Love, B. (2019). *We want to do more than survive: Abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

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## BACKGROUND

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### OSSS Overview

[Oakland Starting Smart and Strong \(OSSS\)](#) is an early childhood collaborative with the overarching long-term goal of creating universal access to high-quality early learning experiences that promote healthy child development and that support kindergarten readiness. OSSS has built a strong, consistent early childhood collaborative table that serves to strengthen the early childhood system while allowing for innovation and creativity. OSSS has engaged systems leaders, early childhood education providers, parent advocacy groups, community based organizations, funders and Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), to collaboratively develop and implement strategies to best serve children 0-5 and their families.

Seeded by the Packard Foundation in 2014 with a ten year funding grant, OSSS has brought together key stakeholders in early learning through a collective impact framework, has built a structure including a Lead Planning Team, Task Force, and key Committees and Workgroups. OSSS work is anchored in four pillar focus areas: (1) Professional Development for Formal Early Childhood Educators, (2) Support for Family, Friend, and Neighbor Caregivers, (3) Ensuring Children’s Healthy Development, and (4) Scaling Strong Systems and Ensuring Long-Term Investment. OSSS is committed to lifting up Oakland’s unique community strategies and solutions in these pillar focus areas to inform statewide policy and to significantly increase public and private resources impacting early learning.



### Trauma Informed Practices as a ‘Testing and Learning’ Focus

As part of Packard’s Starting Smart and Strong Initiative, OSSS was asked to identify a ‘testing and learning’ focus for Oakland that would inform instructional practice in formal early childhood education settings, and eventually be scaled to impact the broader early learning system. Trauma-informed practices surfaced as a significant need and gap for children, and teachers began identifying the need for classroom practices that could address trauma. OSSS selected trauma informed practices as the ‘testing and learning’ focus for Oakland, during the third year of the collaborative. The project was initially called “OTIP: Oakland Trauma Informed Practices”. Collaborative members determined that the ultimate aim of OTIP was to increase the resilience and healthy social emotional development of children in trauma sensitive and trauma informed healing environments. OTIP was renamed to *ROCK: Resilient Oakland Communities and Kids*, to ensure that the project’s name reflected our strength-based framework and values.

## Structure

ROCK is structured collaboratively, with the following partners:

- OUSD and City of Oakland Head Start, the two largest early childhood education providers in Oakland, along with early childhood educators from the YMCA Head Start and Unity Council Head Start Programs
- The New Teacher Center (NTC), whose coach Melissa Luc developed the Professional Learning Community (PLC) Scope and Sequence framework, and provided PLC facilitation and coaching for OUSD educators
- Mental health consultants from Jewish Family and Community Services (JFCS) Valentina Torres and Marla Rosen facilitated City of Oakland PLCs
- Content experts and training facilitators Dr. LaWanda Wesley (Director of Quality Enhancement and Professional Development at OUSD), Dr. Julie Nicholson (Professor of Practice at Mills College, School of Education) and Julie Kurtz (Founder, Center for Op
- Ken Breniman, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Registered Yoga Teacher, provided an ongoing yoga and mindfulness series for educators
- Evaluators Julie Nicholson and Keith Welch (Data Analyst at OUSD) designed and implemented the quantitative and qualitative evaluation. The ROCK evaluators are coordinating with the broader evaluation of OSSS, conducted by Engage R+D.
- OSSS staff provided the backbone organization and administration

Representatives came together as a Planning Group to discuss principles, develop the Driver Diagram and Logic Model, develop a programmatic framework, create tools and review implementation and evaluation data.

## 2019-20 Components

2019-20 ROCK program offerings were significantly impacted by the unprecedented circumstances due to Covid-19. The following programmatic components were offered:

**Trainings.** Group trainings for early childhood educators, led and facilitated by Julie Kurz, Dr. Wesley and Dr. Nicholson. Trainings Offered to OUSD, City of Oakland, YMCA and Unity Council Head Start Programs:

- ROCK 201: Going Deeper with Practical Classroom Strategies (Nov 2019) - all day in person training
- Race Equity and Trauma (Mar 2020) - in person training cancelled due to the pandemic
- Online 6-Part Webinar Series, one hour each. (Apr 8-May 13, 2020):
  - Week 1: Strengthening Self-Awareness to Reduce Burnout in Times of Stress
  - Week 2: Family Engagement Strategies that Promote Resilience
  - Week 3: Trauma-Responsive Leadership and Supervision
  - Week 4: Developing Curriculum to Teach Children about Their Brain
  - Week 5: Teaching Sensory Literacy
  - Week 6: Promoting Strategies for Self-Regulation & Managing Big Emotions

Trainings offered to community members and early childhood educators:

- Online 6-Part Webinar Series, one hour each. (May 19-Jun 30, 2020)
  - Week 1: Trauma 101: Neurobiology
  - Week 2: Strengthening Self-Awareness to Reduce Burnout in Times of Stress
  - Week 3: Family Engagement Strategies that Promote Resilience
  - Week 4: Trauma-Responsive Leadership and Supervision
  - Week 5: Teaching Sensory Literacy
  - Week 6: Promoting Strategies for Self-Regulation & Managing Big Emotions

**Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).** Monthly facilitated peer learning sessions for early childhood educators at OUSD and City of Oakland Head Start

- OUSD had one PLC with 3 child development centers (Arroyo Viejo, Acorn Woodland, and Cox Reach) participating, facilitated by an NTC coach. The OUSD PLCs met six times, with the last session held via zoom.
- City of Oakland Head Start had two PLCs with three sites (Lion Creek Crossing, Brookfield/Cosmo and San Antonio Park) participating, facilitated by mental health consultants. The City of Oakland PLCs continued through the pandemic in a virtual format via zoom, and met for a total of nine times.

**Yoga and mindfulness series.** Six week sessions of yoga and mindfulness ('Happy and Healthy Yoga Stress Reduction Series') were offered to OUSD ECE teachers throughout the year.

The series was designed to focus on reducing stress and increasing overall well-being by exploring mind-body tools, including breathwork, body scan relaxation techniques, and movement exercises. The yoga series was offered at two different times of day, at 3:30 and 5:15, to accommodate differing schedules of OUSD early childhood educators. Two in person six-part series (for a total of 12 sessions at each time) were offered from September through December. Eight sessions



at each time slot were offered from January through early March 2020, and nine virtual sessions at each slot were offered via zoom from March through early June 2020.

**Organizational self-study tool.** Interviews to create an organizational self-study tool for trauma-informed practices were conducted. The self-study tool was unable to be distributed due to the pandemic.

## GUIDING FRAMEWORKS

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**Driver Diagram:** The Early Learning Lab developed the ROCK Driver Diagram with the Planning group, identifying the project's aims, drivers, activities and measures.

**Logic Model:** A West Ed evaluator developed the ROCK 2018-19 Logic Model, outlining the project's inputs, activities, and short/medium/long term outcomes for teachers and children.



**Adult Learning Best Practices:** The ROCK trainings, coaching and learning communities were planned and implemented based on several best practices documented in the research on adult learning:

- Adult learning is most successful when it is a **learner driven process** in which adults are supported to have control and agency in their own learning process.
- Research suggests that adults learn most effectively through **experiential learning**. Specifically, understanding of new information is strengthened when adult learners can connect what they have learned from their current experiences to what they learned in the past as well as when they can imagine possible applications of the ideas for their future practice.
- Adult learning is supported in contexts that involve **peer learning and collaboration**. Adult learners construct meanings through their interactions with others. When adults work in environments where they are supported to collaborate with their colleagues, they

can build trusting relationships that enhance their ability to teach and learn from one another.

- **Self-reflection** is an important skill to support adult learning and involves the examination of personal assumptions, values, and beliefs. As adults develop skills in self-reflection, they strengthen their awareness of how they come to know what they know, including an awareness of the specific cultural and contextual experiences that inform how they understand and make meaning. **Critical reflection** extends the process of self-reflection to consider issues of equity.
- Contemporary research on adult learning describes the important **role of emotions in learning**. Brain research is confirming the essential role of emotions in learning and the need to attend to the emotional context in learning for children and adults. This research points out that emotions influence cognition in learning, attention, and memory.
- **High quality digital learning experiences** support adults to engage in a learner driven process that is highly interactive and responsive to their individual interests and personal learning goals. Adult learners need to develop specific digital skills and knowledge for learning in online environments.



## EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

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### Qualitative Data Sources and Analysis

Qualitative data sources included the following:

**Semi-Structured Interviews** (Audio-taped and transcribed in full) with the following individuals:

- 3 Participants of ROCK Training 201 (YMCA, Early Head Start, OUSD)
- Yoga Teacher
- 4 Yoga Participants
- 2 Site Administrators and 2 Preschool teachers, OUSD
- Director of Quality Enhancement & Professional Development, OUSD
- Senior Program Consultant, New Teacher Center
- Coach, New Teacher Center
- 2 Early Childhood Mental Health consultants, Jewish Family and Community Services
- Disability & Mental Health Coordinator, City of Oakland Early Head Start/Head Start
- Program Supervisor, City of Oakland Early Head Start and Head Start
- Site Supervisor, Director, and 2 Preschool teachers, City of Oakland Head Start
- 2 Head Start/Early Head Start Teachers, Unity Council

**Observational Field Notes** were taken at three ROCK events:

- Yoga Class with Ken Breniman
- Zoom Yoga Class for Children
- ROCK Training 200 on Strategies

### Qualitative Data Analysis

A multi-step process of coding the data was completed. All of the data were coded inductively to identify emergent themes from the voices, meanings, perspectives and stories from the study participants. The data were also coded deductively using several a priori concepts from our guiding frameworks (Core Principles, Adult Learning Best Practices, themes represented in the literature and added to the ROCK self-study tool).

### Quantitative Data Sources and Analysis

Quantitative data sources included the following:

- Attendance: ROCK 201, Webinars, PLCs, Yoga sessions
- Feedback forms: ROCK 201, Webinars, PLCs, Yoga sessions
- Coaching: Interaction log, Teacher observation checklist
- Teacher opinion survey: Pre and Post

**Attendance.** We collected attendance using sign-in sheets at the ROCK 201 training, ROCK Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), ROCK yoga sessions, and the ROCK webinar series. Tracking attendance at each ROCK event helps us to answer several key evaluation questions, such as:

- How many people attended each event? How many from each agency?
- How much did attendance vary throughout the year?
- How many people attended multiple different types of events (201 training, PLCs, Yoga, Webinars)?

**Participant feedback.** We collected participant feedback using online and paper/pencil feedback surveys after the ROCK 201 training, ROCK Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), ROCK yoga sessions, and the ROCK webinar series. To develop the feedback forms we used during the 2019-20 school year, the ROCK leadership team collaboratively reviewed and adapted forms used in previous years. The feedback forms each asked quantitative Likert-scale questions and open-ended qualitative questions. The quantitative data from the feedback forms helped the leadership team to make adjustments to programming throughout the year and also help us to answer key evaluation questions in this summative report, such as:

- To what extent were participants satisfied with the ROCK events? Was there variation between events?
- To what extent did participants report changes in stress after attending the ROCK PLCs and yoga sessions?

**Coaching.** We collected data on coaching using an online coaching interaction form that the ROCK coach completed after each coaching interaction with a teacher. The interaction log included questions on: the length of the coaching interaction, the coaching tools used, the type of interaction, what was discussed, what specific ROCK strategies were discussed (if any), and next steps. The interaction log was created by the ROCK leadership team in collaboration with the ROCK coach to ensure that the form provided the coach with actionable information to inform coaching throughout the year. The coaching interaction data helps us to answer key evaluation questions, such as:

- What types of ROCK strategies did the coach talk to teachers about? How often? Were some strategies discussed more frequently?
- How much time did the coach spend coaching teachers? How much variation was there between teachers?

**Teacher observations.** The ROCK coach also conducted observations of teachers' use of attunement strategies, resilience building, and classroom environment strategies. The ROCK leadership team collaborated with the ROCK coach to create observation checklists that would help to inform coaching throughout the year as well as help to gauge the extent to which teacher practice changed after attending ROCK events. Originally, the coach planned to conduct observations early in the 2019-20 school year and then again at the end of the year. However, as

a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the end of year observations were cancelled. The coach therefore conducted six in-person observations in December 2019. The observations helped us to better understand teacher implementation of trauma informed practice strategies in classrooms, such as:

- Attunement strategies
- Strategies to build resilience
- Classroom environment strategies to support children’s self-regulation

**Teacher opinion survey.** To analyze changes in teachers’ feelings of self-efficacy, job satisfaction, attitudes towards family engagement, attitudes towards institutional racism and personal biases, and body awareness and self-regulation we used an adapted version of the Teacher Opinion Survey (Geller and Lynch 1999). The original Teacher Opinion Survey is a 12-item scale which measures Early Care and Education providers' self-efficacy. It assesses their feelings of confidence and competence in managing challenging behaviors, and their ability to make a positive difference in the lives of children. The items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale where 1= strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. The ROCK leadership team chose 11 of the original 12 items and then added an additional four questions related to their attitudes towards trauma responsive family engagement and understanding of institutional racism and personal biases. The team also added four questions related to body awareness and self-regulation. These four questions were on a 4-point Likert scale where 1=Rarely and 4=Almost always.

The Teacher Opinion Survey was first administered using a paper/pencil survey in September and October. A total of 27 Oakland Unified School District and Oakland Head Start teachers filled out the survey at the beginning of the year. The survey was then administered again using an online form in April and May. A total of 20 Oakland Unified School District and Oakland Head Start teachers completed the survey at the end of the year. The Teacher Opinion



Survey data helps us to answer important evaluation questions, such as:

- To what extent did teachers’ feelings of self-efficacy change over the course of the year?
- To what extent did teachers’ job satisfaction change over the course of the year?
- To what extent did teachers’ confidence in their understanding of institutional racism and personal biases change over the course of the year?
- To what extent did teachers’ attitudes towards trauma responsive family engagement change over the course of the year?
- To what extent did teachers’ perception of their body awareness and self-regulation change over the course of the year?

## FINDINGS

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### Strengths and Success Stories: Qualitative Data

#### Key Themes: Strengths and Success Stories

Teachers, administrators, mental health professionals and other participants overwhelmingly reported that ROCK is beneficial for a range of reasons. Many reported ROCK helping them to manage the stress associated with COVID.

- **Supporting teachers to connect ROCK concepts and content to themselves first.** First Tune Inward ☒ Then: Think about Connections with Children and Families
- **Having a structured space for educators to reflect and dialogue together.** Coupling training with either coaching and/or PLCs is helpful. Interactivity in the training and a regular space for teachers to meet consistently to reflect and talk together about the content and implementation of ROCK strategies in their classrooms/programs.
- **Integrating mindfulness and a somatic approach in all ROCK activities** (e.g., breathing, visualizations, grounding exercises) including training, PLCs, meetings.
- **Including teachers, administrators, coaches, mental health providers, family advocates and others in the PLCs.** Collaboration between coach, PLC facilitators and mental health consultants is important; this can be supported within the PLC. Including discussion of participants' personal connections to the content and discussion of a focal child or individual families.
- **Yoga with Ken:** Teachers identify many benefits of the yoga program for themselves and their work with children.

#### Lifting Up Participant Voices....

*"I always had a mindful moment when we were checking in...I'm a somatic practitioner and I use breathing and visualizations and grounding exercises. So I found that the teachers really enjoyed that... I paid particular attention to the stories and the vignettes, as the facilitator, to be able to recall and reflect something that was said, a month previous or three months previous. So those are important. It makes a teacher feel valued and heard and validated... remembering that a child's job is play and that it's important for us to play too. And I think I referred to that part is our little girls coming out." (PLC Facilitator, 6.15.20)*

*"ROCK helped me, it helped me for self-care...so many of our workshops and stuff its geared around the classroom and things, but this is geared to like us, you know, what's going to help us internally, what's going to help us to keep going as individuals... the ROCK training, it really*

*helps. So if we can continue that for next year, that would be great. It's beneficial to all of us, especially in this kind of job that we do. We need something to help us with mental our mental wellbeing and, you know, it helps us, emotionally.* (Director, OHS, 7.1.20)

## Strengths and Success Stories: Quantitative Data

### Training and Webinars

**Participants had positive reactions to ROCK 201 and the webinar trainings.** 72% of participants in the ROCK 201 training in November rated the training as excellent. Additionally, 80% of participants rated the ease of understanding the trainers as excellent and 78% said that the materials and PowerPoint were excellent. Participants in both webinar series reported similarly positive experiences. The positive response was particularly pronounced for three webinars in the first series: “Developing Curriculum to Teach Children about Their Brain,” “Promoting Strategies for Self-Regulation & Managing Big Emotions,” and “Teaching Sensory Literacy,” and three webinars in the second series: “Trauma Responsive Leadership and Supervision” and “Promoting Strategies for Self-Regulation & Managing Big Emotions.”

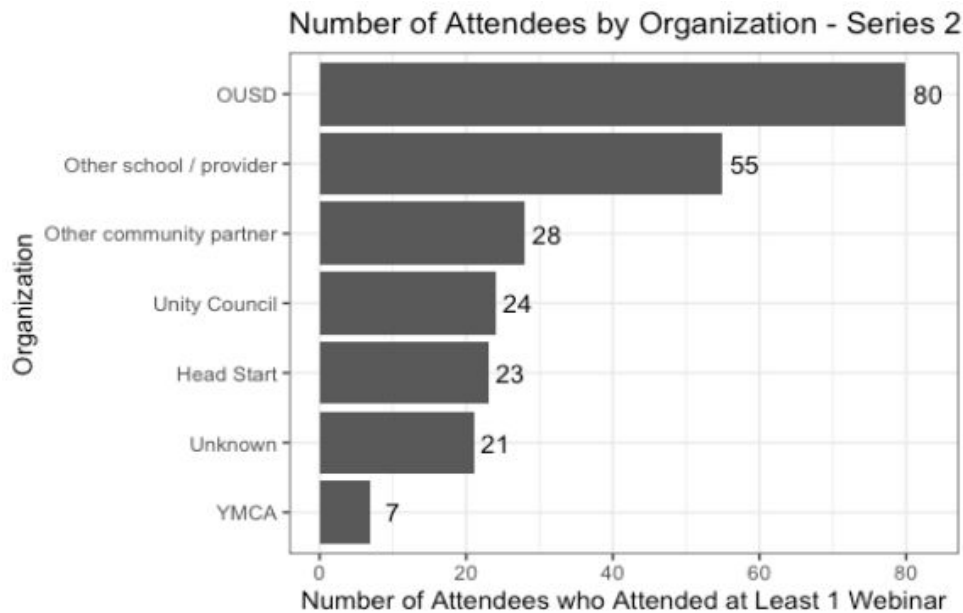
**Many teachers across separate agencies attended a ROCK training or webinar.** The ROCK 201 training was attended by educators from four different agencies: 22 from OUSD; 13 from YMCA; 6 from Unity Council and 5 from City of Oakland Head Start. The first webinar series was advertised to educators from these four agencies only, and was attended by a larger number of educators than the 201 training. On average 85 participants attended each of these webinars.

**Figure 1: ROCK Webinar Series #1 Attendance**



The second webinar series was advertised across the Early Childhood community in Oakland and Alameda County. As a result, *these webinars drew a broader audience than the first webinar series or the ROCK 201 training*. The organization with the highest attendance was OUSD, followed by Unity Council, Duck’s Nest Preschool, and Head Start. Attendance also included representatives of community partner organizations such as Oakland Promise, Oakland Public Library, and Safe Passages.

**Figure 2: Rock Webinar Series #2 Attendees by Organization**



Attendance at the first two webinars in the second webinar series were the highest of any ROCK event this year at 159 and 137 participants, respectively. After those first two webinars, attendance ranged from 53 to 89 participants.<sup>2</sup> Overall, an average of 94 participants

attended the second webinar series sessions.



<sup>2</sup> These attendance figures only include participants who participated in at least 20 minutes of the webinar

## **ROCK Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).**

**Participants in the ROCK PLCs for Oakland Unified School District and Head Start educators reporting having positive experiences.** For OUSD, 40% of participants were extremely satisfied and 60% mostly satisfied with the ROCK PLC. For Head Start educators, 64% reported being extremely satisfied and 36% were mostly satisfied with the PLC. Attendance at ROCK PLCs was consistent for OUSD and Head Start with the exception of February (OUSD) and March (Head Start). OUSD consistently had 10-14 educators attend the PLCs and Head Start tended to have 14-16 attendees.

**Based upon the 2018-19 evaluation, the strengths of the 2018-2019 PLCs included:**

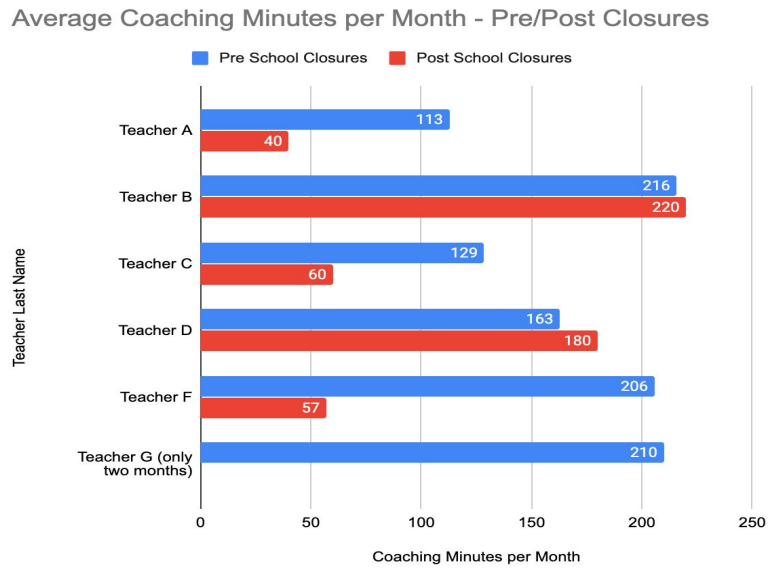
- Provided a time for reflection and allowed for increased self-awareness
- Sessions promoted collaboration and learning from and with coworkers
- Sessions were personalized to the needs of teachers and allowed an exploration of trauma triggers
- Resources provided - books and handouts - were helpful
- Food and gifts were provided

**ROCK coaching.** To help reinforce the material covered in the ROCK PLC, five OUSD PLC participants also received individualized coaching support throughout the year (a sixth teacher received coaching for two months out of the year).

**The PLC participants reported having positive experiences with coaching.** 100% of the respondents to the end of year feedback survey strongly agreed that conversation with their coach helped them to better process the content from the PLC.

**All teachers received a significant amount of time with their coach throughout the year,** as shown below. The amount of time the coach spent with each teacher was dependent on each individual teacher's needs and capacity. Additionally, after schools were closed in March due to the COVID-19 virus, the coach provided significant support to some teachers who felt less confident in providing strong distance learning support to their students. Among the five teachers who received coaching throughout the year, they received an average of **165 minutes of coaching per month before the school closures** and 108 minutes after the school closures.

**Figure 3: Average coaching minutes per month before and after COVID-19 school closures**



**Before the school closures, the coach discussed ROCK strategies with teachers in a majority of coaching interactions.** With the exception of November, the coach discussed ROCK strategies with the teachers 58%-100% of the time. During interactions when the coach was not discussing ROCK strategies, they tended to discuss topics such as: curriculum and units, circle time, literacy (read-alouds, writing), differentiation and small group engagement, equity, privilege, culturally responsive teaching, and play.

**Table 1: Number of coaching interactions discussing ROCK-specific strategies**

Month	Number of coaching interactions	Percent of interactions discussing ROCK-specific strategies
September	19	58%
October	16	75%
November	7	14%
December	17	71%
January	8	75%
February	6	100%
March (before school closures)	7	86%
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>68%</b>



The coach discussed a wide range of ROCK strategies with teachers – especially physical environment and schedules and routines. When looking closer at the description of what the coach and teacher discussed, one theme that emerges is discussions about each teacher’s focus child.

**Table 2: ROCK strategies discussed during coaching interactions**

Strategy	Number of times discussed
Physical environment strategies	21
Schedules and routines strategies	18
Supporting children’s growing sense of autonomy and initiative	15
Building relationships “in-tune” with children	14
Providing opportunities and activities to develop and practice self-regulation skills	10
Attunement strategies	7
Transitions strategies	0

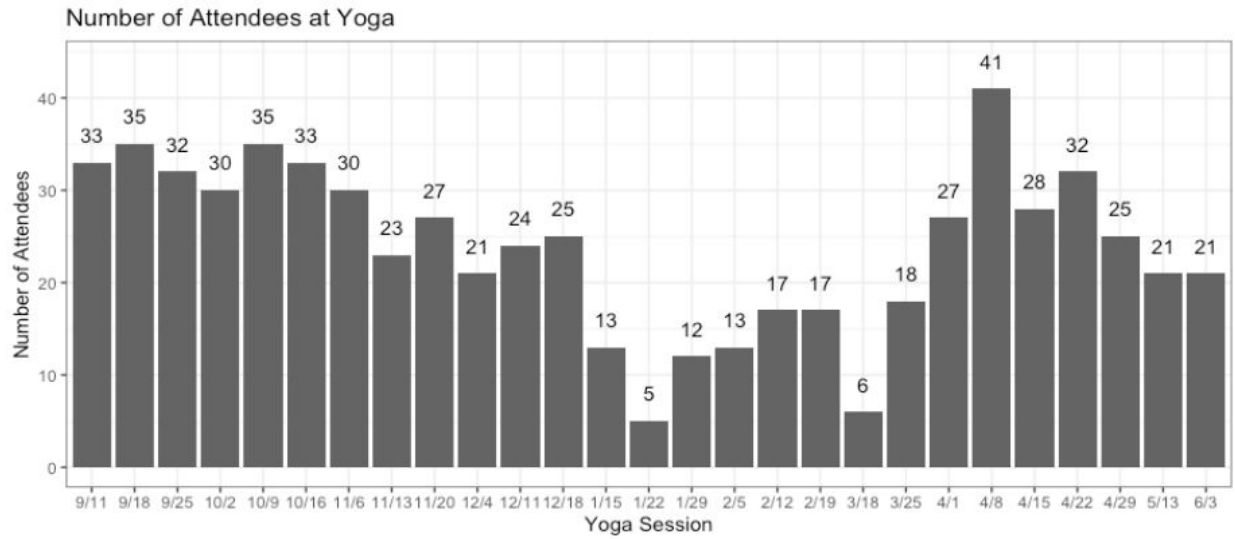
### **Yoga and Mindfulness with Ken.**

A large group of educators consistently attended yoga sessions from 9/11/19 to 6/3/20, despite the transition to virtual yoga in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 closure. From 9/11/19 to 3/4/20, yoga was offered to OUSD educators on two sessions every Wednesday.<sup>3</sup> After the COVID-19 closures in mid March 2020, yoga was offered to educators and families over Zoom. The attendance data shows a slight decrease in participation in January through March, but then a steady increase after the implementation of virtual yoga at the end of March.

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<sup>3</sup> Yoga was only offered for one session on 1/22/20 and 2/5/20

**Figure 4: Yoga attendance**



## **ROCK Outcomes**

### **Qualitative Data**

Participants identified many outcomes resulting from their participation in ROCK. The most commonly reported outcomes are reported below.

### Key Themes: ROCK Outcomes

- **Deficit views of children and their behavior are beginning to be disrupted.** Shifted away from ‘what’s wrong with this kid’ to ‘what’s the context of the child?’
- **Teachers increased self-awareness of their own stress and trauma. Many reports of teachers learning to disrupt their reactivity.** Teachers learning to identify their triggers and use pausing and reflection to disrupt reactivity in response to children’s and adults’ challenging behavior.
- **Many ROCK strategies are being implemented in classrooms and in programs.**
- **Teachers and administrators strengthened their understanding about the importance of engaging in self-care.**
- **Yoga reduced teachers’ stress and pain resulting from teaching young children** (e.g., shoulder pain, knee and leg pain etc.)

### *Lifting Up Participant Voices....*

*“I think that the biggest shift that I’ve seen is... a shift away from ‘what’s wrong with this kid’ to ‘what’s the context of the child?’” (Administrator, 12.19.19)*

*“You just have to realize and stop saying these kids are bad. I used to think actually these kids are bad, they’re bad. And I stopped using bad years ago, but I said they’re challenging, but it’s not even that. You got to figure out what’s going on with them” (Teacher, 11.2.19)*

*“Teachers are beginning to pause and think about their first reaction to their experience of the situation. And then to think about ways in which their responses are affecting the situation... how are their own experiences or their own triggers or their own even biases, affecting how they’re reacting to children’s behaviors, challenging behaviors” (ROCK Leadership Team Member, 1.29.20)*

*“We all have a similar problem like back pain, shoulder pain, neck pain. I guess that’s because at school, we are sitting in those little chairs that we are not supposed to sit in. We’re supposed to sit in bigger chairs because they help our posture to sit better. While sitting in all those little kids chairs, those three year olds, I guess it’s not good for our back and then this program kind of release our stress and then like make us stand taller and balance our left/right back to the same postures.” (Yoga participants’ interview, 3.4.20)*

### **Strategies that Support Organizational Change and the Implementation of ROCK**

Participants identified many strategies that supported organizational change and the implementation of ROCK in individual classrooms and in programs/schools. Key findings related to this are reported below.

### **Key Themes: Strategies to Support Organizational Change and the Implementation of ROCK in Classrooms, Programs/Schools**

- **Administrator involvement and commitment to ROCK.** Encourage and incentivize administrator participation in ROCK. Ensure they understand the 'why' (value add) and align the ROCK content and strategies with the work they are already doing.
- **Access to ROCK trainings.** Support a wider range of people in different roles (e.g., instructional assistants, staff etc.) and across the community serving young children and families to have access to ROCK content and strategies.
- **Time and space for reflection and dialogue about how to make sense of and implement ROCK concepts and strategies.** This is needed for administrators, teachers (including IAs), coaches, PLC facilitators and others (e.g., mental health consultants etc.). The format might include coaching, PLCs or book groups. Key is that training is coupled with systematic time and space for reflection, planning and practice.
- **Emphasize race equity throughout all ROCK trainings, conversations, content and strategies.** As trauma and resilience for children, families and the workforce are deeply and historically connected to systems of oppression and privilege especially historical and current impacts of structural racism, discussions of race, racism and racial equity need to be integrated into all ROCK strategies aiming for individual and organizational change.
- **Collaboration with mental health consultants.** Be intentional about including mental health professionals in the ROCK PD activities.
- **Focusing on teachers' health and well-being first.** Support teachers to understand how their own stress and trauma impacts their work. Building skills in self-awareness, triggers and practicing strategies to help them reduce their stress and reflect on their practice, will support goals of improving outcomes for children.
- **Aligning family engagement strategies with ROCK content and strategies.** Acknowledge the importance of engaging with families in the ROCK initiative. Begin planning for how to expand participation to parents and families.

#### **Lifting Up Participant Voices....**

*"The other thing about scaling is I think that the administrator has to be super, super, super invested. I think they do." (Administrator, 12.19.19)*

*"I certainly, I think that having an administrator be part of it is really important...it helped me to kind of stay in the loop and have conversations...having an administrator present from each site is really important, to lend some credibility to what you're doing, add value to it." (Administrator, 6.23.20)*

*"All the alarm bells were like 'teachers have to be able to engage in self-care'. Teachers have to be able to have places where they can talk about their own feelings, teachers have to be able to do this. And now we've kind of moved it from, I'd say like in the first year of ROCK being really focused on kids to then the next year being focused on teachers. And this is what I was taking away from it as the administrator, being focused on teachers and their self-care so that they could then take care of the kids." (Administrator, 12.19.19)*

*"Adult learning works when professional development is not provided in isolation, when there's a coach that goes along with it as well as a series of [trainings], that's when the real learning and change and application happens. And so we can have a couple of professional development sessions, which are fabulous. And I think you need to have that extra layer of the coaching because that's going to really support those teachers to then go back into their room, try it out, reflect on it, revise what they're doing. And then I think the third layer, which is what you're getting at is the administrative support." (ROCK Leadership Team Member, 12.13.19)*

*"Teachers have to be able to have places where they can talk about their own feelings, teachers have to be able to do this. And now we've kind of moved it from, in the first year of ROCK being really focused on kids to then the next year being focused on teachers...being focused on teachers and their self-care so that they could then take care of the kids." (Administrator, 12.19.19)*

## Quantitative Data

To explore how teacher perceptions changed over the course of the year, we conducted a survey of PLC participants at the beginning and end of the year. The survey explored teachers' perceptions of their own self efficacy, job satisfaction, confidence in using trauma responsive strategies when interacting with families, confidence in their own understanding of how institutional racism impacts their personal experiences, and body awareness and self-regulation. The survey was completed by 27 OUSD and Head Start teachers at the beginning of the year<sup>4</sup> and 20 at the end of the year. It is important to note that, because the survey was anonymous, the teachers who completed the survey at the beginning of the year might not have been the same teachers who completed the survey at the end of the year.

The survey suggested that **teachers felt an increase in their general sense of self-efficacy in the long term, but a slight decrease in confidence for handling specific situations in the short term.** For example, there was an increase of 20 percentage points in the percent of teachers strongly agreeing that: "If I keep trying I can find a way



<sup>4</sup> 6 teachers received a shorter version of the survey and therefore did not complete all items

to reach even the most challenging child.” Additionally, there was a 15 percentage point increase in the percentage of teachers strongly agreeing that: “If some children in my class are not doing as well as others, I believe that I should change my way of working with them.” However, there was a 13 percentage point decrease in the percentage of teachers who strongly agreed that: “If a student in my class became disruptive and noisy, I feel pretty sure I’d know how to respond effectively.”

**Table 3: Teacher opinion survey results – self efficacy items**

Question	Percent with most positive response		
	Pre (n=27)	Post (n=20)	Change
If I keep trying I can find a way to reach even the most challenging child	34.6%	55.0%	20.4
I can help my preschool children learn skills that they need to cope with adversity in their lives	40.0%	45.0%	5.0
There are some children in my classroom that I simply cannot have any influence on	16.7%	20.0%	3.3
If some children in my class are not doing as well as others, I believe that I should change my way of working with them	34.6%	50.0%	15.4
As a preschool teacher, I can’t really do much, because the way a child develops depends mostly on what goes on at home	25.0%	25.0%	0.0
I can help children develop skills to make successful choices later in life	53.8%	55.0%	1.2
I feel a sense of hopelessness about the future of the children I work with	44.0%	40.0%	-4.0
If a student in my class became disruptive and noisy, I feel pretty sure I’d know how to respond effectively	23.1%	10.0%	-13.1

The survey also suggested that teachers’ **felt an increased desire to stay in the early childhood teaching profession, despite a slight increase in feeling overwhelmed by their job.** The percentage of teachers who strongly agreed with the statement “I can imagine myself teaching preschool for several more years” increased by 14 percentage points. At the same time, there was a 10% decrease in the percentage of teachers strongly disagreeing with the statement “I frequently feel overwhelmed by my job.”

**Table 4: Teacher opinion survey results – job satisfaction results**

Question	Percent with most positive response		
	Pre (n=27)	Post (n=20)	Change
I can imagine myself teaching preschool for several more years	36.0%	50.0%	14.0
I frequently feel overwhelmed by my job	15.4%	5.0%	-10.4
On a typical day, I feel a sense of accomplishment as a preschool teacher	29.2%	25.0%	-4.2

The survey shows that an **increased percentage of teachers showed confidence in using trauma responsive strategies when interacting with families.** The percentage of teachers strongly agreeing with the statement “I use one or more strategies to remain calm and professional with a parent/family member when they are upset/triggered” increased by 15 percentage points. Also, there was a 5 percentage point increase in the percentage of teachers strongly agreeing with the statement “I think about how to convey feelings of safety and predictability when interacting with parents/families.”

**Table 5: Teacher opinion survey results – family engagement results**

Question	Percent with most positive response		
	Pre (n=21)	Post (n=20)	Change
I think about how to convey feelings of safety and predictability when interacting with parents/families	30.0%	35.0%	5.0
I use one or more strategies to remain calm and professional with a parent/family member when they are upset/triggered	25.0%	40.0%	15.0

The survey showed a **slight decrease in teachers’ confidence in their own understanding of how institutional racism impacts their personal experiences of stress and trauma.** Specifically, there was a 10 percentage point decrease in the percentage of teachers strongly agreeing with the statement “I understand how institutional racism impacts my personal experiences of stress and trauma.” This change could be due to teachers’ increased awareness of institutional racism due to the widespread activism around racial injustices during spring of 2020.

**Table 6: Teacher opinion survey results – institutional racism and personal biases results**

Question	Percent with most positive response		
	Pre (n=21)	Post (n=20)	Change
I understand how institutional racism impacts my personal experiences of stress and trauma.	20.0%	10.0%	-10.0
I learned strategies that can help me uncover my own cultural viewpoints and biases.	15.0%	15.0%	0.0

Lastly, the survey suggested that **teachers felt an increase in their body awareness and self-regulation skills**. There was a 10 percentage point increase in the percentage of teachers agreeing with the statements: “I sense my body, whether eating, cooking, cleaning or talking,” “I am friendly to myself when things go wrong,” and “In difficult situations I can pause without immediately reacting.”

**Table 7: Teacher opinion survey results – body awareness and self-regulation results**

Question	Percent with most positive response		
	Pre (n=21)	Post (n=20)	Change
I sense my body, whether eating, cooking, cleaning or talking.	30.0%	40.0%	10.0
I am friendly to myself when things go wrong.	20.0%	30.0%	10.0
I notice my feelings without reacting to them.	30.0%	25.0%	-5.0
In difficult situations I can pause without immediately reacting.	25.0%	35.0%	10.0

To get an initial sense of what ROCK strategies teachers were using early in the year, the OUSD ROCK coach conducted observations of five teachers in December 2019. The coach planned to return at the end of the year to conduct follow-up observations, but this plan was cancelled due to the COVID-19 school closures. Nonetheless, the December observations provide a glimpse into the strategies that teachers were using after three months of PLCs and coaching.

- **Relationship-building strategies:** Most teachers were observed giving positive attention and providing comfort. None of the teachers were observed helping children recognize feelings in themselves and others or express their sensations and feelings, providing warm and supportive feedback, or reframing self-regulation breakdowns.



- **Self-regulation skills strategies:** Most teachers were observed using mindfulness practice. None of the teachers were observed playing games that involve memory, teaching about emotions or sensory/feelings vocabulary, describing activities and reasons 'why' for doing them.
- **Supporting autonomy and initiative strategies:** Most teachers were observed supporting children's self-initiated play. None of the teachers were observed reframing challenges, encouraging children to take safe and considered risks, or supporting children's creativity.
- **Physical environment strategies:** Most teachers were observed as having a quiet and safe space where children may choose to be alone when distressed. None of the teachers were observed using photos to show re-regulating from one state to another.
- **Schedules and routines strategies:** Only a small number of teachers were observed using schedules and routines strategies such as pricing and actively using a visual schedule throughout the day or involving children in using the visual schedule.
- **Transitions and routines strategies:** A majority of teachers were observed giving children warnings before a transition will occur or using visual or auditory prompts for transition times. None of the teachers were observed personalizing visual prompts for individual children who need extra support or structuring transitions so children have something to do.

## Challenges, Barriers and Lessons Learned

### Key Themes: Challenges, Barriers and Lessons Learned

- **Lack of administrator engagement.** Having administrator participation and support is essential, both teachers and administrators reinforce this. However, most administrators did not attend ROCK trainings.
- **Lack of systematic time for reflection, dialogue, planning related to ROCK** for participants, especially those without access to a PLC
- **The "why" of ROCK is not clear for some administrators.** Many do not understand the relevance of trauma/TIP for their work and how ROCK integrates with other district initiatives/priorities (e.g., CSEFEL, MTSS etc.).
- **Not requiring ROCK training as a pre-requisite for educators who participate in PLC.** PLC participants had different levels of knowledge about ROCK content and strategies. PLC facilitators had to slow down and re-teach which prevented educators who attended trainings from going as deep as they would have in the PLCs.

### Lifting Up Participant Voices....

*"The teachers don't have planning time. They want to talk about their children all day long but there's no time to. And so, if you have one teacher who has a plan, I go in and I talk with the teachers, I coach the teachers and we come up with a plan but there's not necessarily a time to talk with instructional assistants about this plan. I go in and I'm coaching and developing teachers to become reflective about their practice but I'm not necessarily sure that [the information] is communicated with everyone in the room. So I think that that's a barrier" (Coach, 1.29.20)*

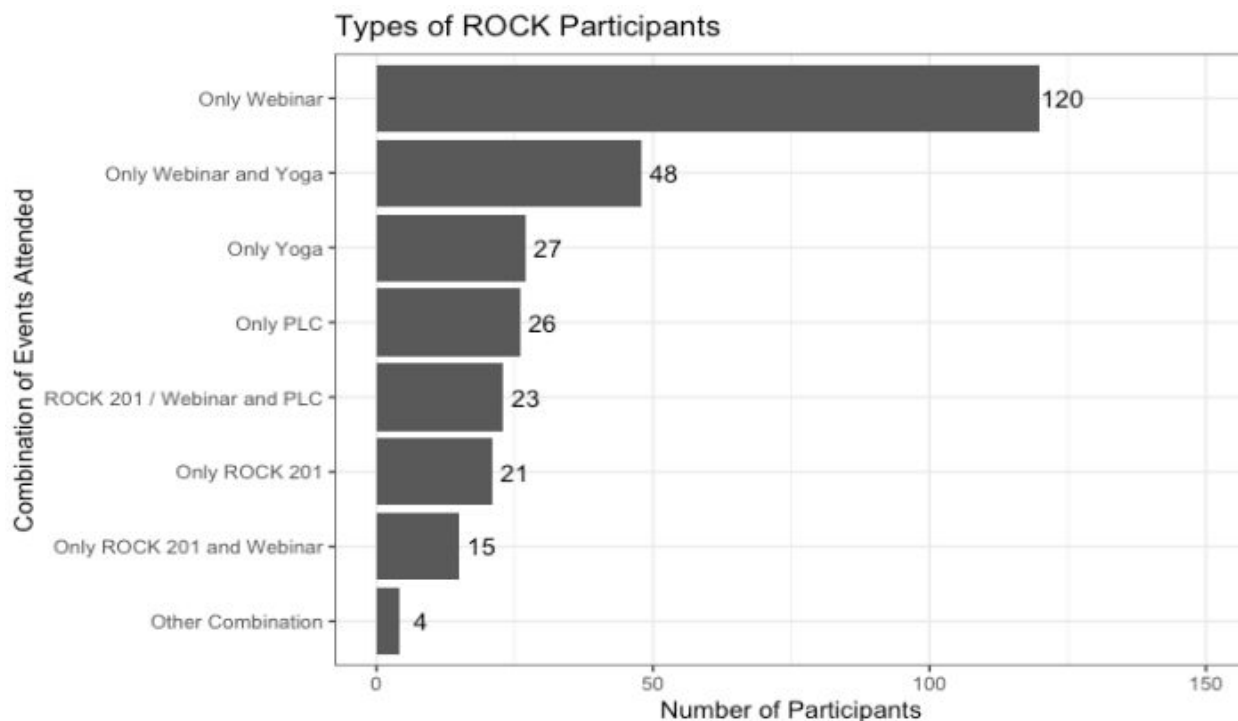
*"We offer a lot but not everyone can go to it...This slows systems change and alignment efforts, especially when teachers and instructional assistants don't have the same training so they can be consistent in the classroom with children" (Coach, NTC, 1.29.20)*

*"Many don't understand ROCK. This is key as many don't think it is within their job description and they don't understand how knowing the neurobiology of stress and trauma would be relevant/helpful to their jobs." (Director, 6.17.20)*

### Dosage and Access

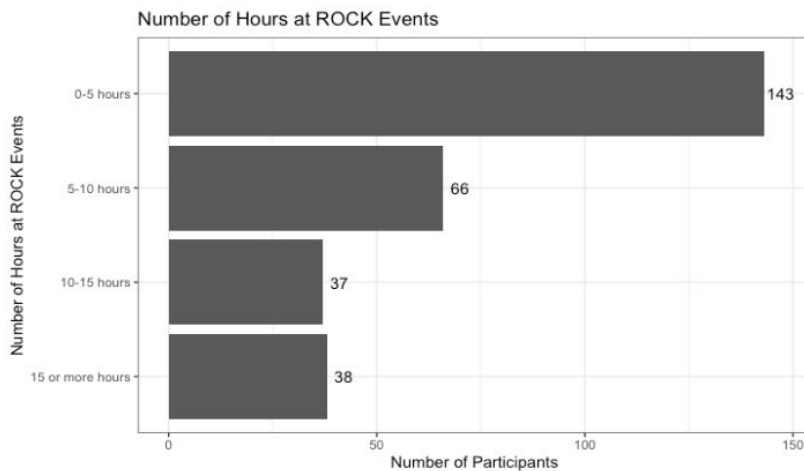
Educators and community partners participated in ROCK in a wide variety of ways in 2019-20. The most common form of participation was to only attend a webinar. 120 of the 284 educators and community partners who participated in ROCK only attended a webinar. The next most common forms of participation was to attend a webinar and at least one yoga session (48 participants) or just a yoga session (27 participants). **However, only 23 educators attended both a PLC and either the ROCK 201 training or a webinar.** Additionally, as discussed above only 6 teachers received individualized coaching throughout the year.

**Figure 5: Number of Types of 2019-20 ROCK Events Attended**



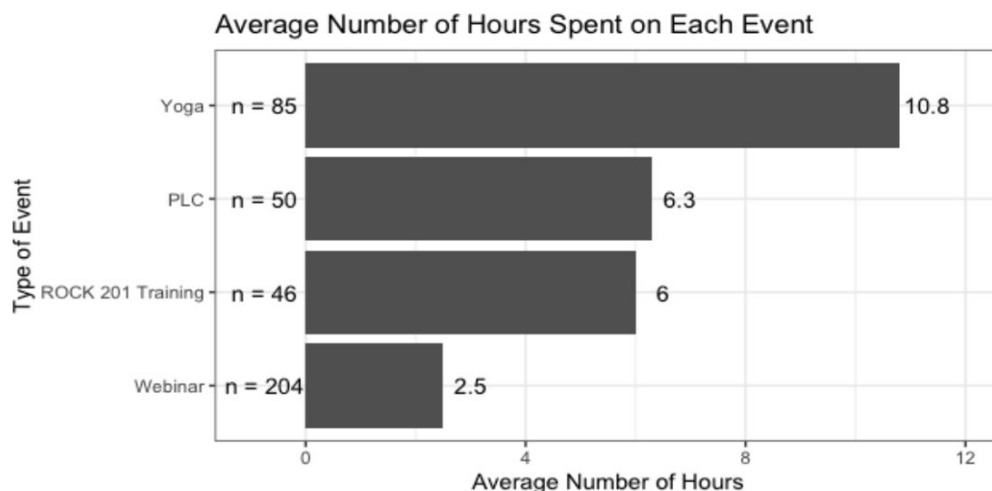
**Although the majority of ROCK participants participated in less than five hours of activities, the level of participation varied widely.** Approximately half of the 284 participants participated in less than 5 hours of activities. Of the other half of participants, most of them participated in 5-10 hours of activities. 37 participants participated in 10-15 hours of activities and 38 participated in over 15 hours of activities. Overall, participants participated in an average of 7.25 hours of events. This data further illustrates that the level of engagement participants had with ROCK varied widely, with many participants attending very few ROCK events while a smaller number of participants were highly engaged with ROCK.

**Figure 6: Number of Hours Spent Overall at ROCK Events in 2019-20**



Participants tended to spend different amounts of time on different types of ROCK events. ROCK participants who participated in yoga spent an average of 10.8 hours attending yoga sessions. Participants spent about 6 hours at the PLCs and the ROCK 201 training. Webinar participants only attended an average of 2.5 hours of webinars.

**Figure 7: Number of Hours Spent at Each ROCK Event in 2019-20**



This data demonstrates that looking only at the number of hours a ROCK participant spent attending ROCK events would not indicate how rich or varied of an experience they had with ROCK. For example, a participant who attended the ROCK 201 training and 6 hours of PLCs would have had a different experience with ROCK than someone who attended 12 hours of yoga and did not attend any of the other events. The participant who attended only yoga sessions would have likely experienced reduced stress and developed a strong understanding of self-care for themselves and their students. The PLC and ROCK 201 participant may not have developed as in-depth of an understanding of self-care as the yoga participant, but they would have had more time to reflect on their own experiences with trauma as well as think about attunement strategies they could bring to the classroom to be responsive to their students' experiences. In short, both of these hypothetical participants likely would have benefited from experiencing the different ROCK activities they did not have the chance to attend.

Research on adult learning shows that adults learn most effectively through experiential learning where they can imagine applications of what they are learning for future practice and learn new information in a variety of interactive formats. Additionally, adults learn best in contexts that involve peer learning and collaboration. Therefore, the total number of hours an educator spends attending ROCK activities is less important than whether the educator had access to experiences that allowed them to learn new material, think about how that material might apply to their practice, and reflect on the material with peers.

In order to achieve these best practices for more educators the ROCK leadership team should ensure that more educators are able to experience ROCK in multiple formats (trainings, webinars, yoga, PLCs). Providing more educators with the opportunity to attend small group PLCs to reflect on strategies and insights gained from large group trainings would be particularly valuable. Additionally, providing individualized coaching for educators would provide them with an even more in depth understanding of the ROCK material and strategies.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ROCK 2021-2022

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Participants offered many recommendations for continuing and improving ROCK. The most common recommendations are summarized below.

### Key Themes: Recommendations for ROCK 2021-2022

- **Continue funding/offering ROCK.** It will be needed more than ever with the stress, uncertainty and changes associated with COVID
- **Expand the number of educators who have opportunities to experience ROCK in multiple formats** (trainings, webinars, PLCs, coaching, yoga). Educators need regular time and space to work in collaboration with others to go deeper in learning to make sense of the language, content and strategies they learn in ROCK trainings and then apply what they are learning to inform/change their daily practice. (See expanded description of this recommendation below)
- **Focus on culturally responsive, anti-racist and anti-bias practices.** Integrate these topics in all ROCK activities, do not silo them (See expanded description of this recommendation below)
- **Offer trainings, provide a systematic space for educators to reflect on their practice** (coaching or PLC), **integrate mindfulness and self-care** (yoga). Include administrators, coaches and mental health consultants.
- **Support teachers to explore how their own history of trauma impacts their teaching.** Teachers need opportunities for reflection and dialogue about their personal trauma/triggers and TR strategies for working with children and families.
- **Expand ROCK across the system.** Articulate the what and 'why' of ROCK to support buy-in. Focus on expanding participation for administrators, mental health consultants, staff, parents and families and other sectors in Oakland (e.g., child welfare)
- **Make ROCK the central focus of PD.** Require administrator involvement and have time on their meeting agendas to discuss ROCK.
- **Identify metrics for tracking ROCK's 'value add.'** Need for more specific data indicators that show the difference ROCK is making at participating sites.

### **Lifting Up Participant Voices....**

*"My recommendation is that the ROCK training will continue. Because it has been very, very helpful to me and I'm sure to all of us... [next year] it's going to be a totally, totally different program. So what we was used to, it's not going to be anymore. So we're going to need some kind of grounding and we need ROCK to stay. We really do." (Administrator, 7.1.20)*

*"We have to continue it because teachers are in crisis. They really are and nobody's ever really paid attention to that...thank goodness ROCK came along" – Teacher, 7.1.20*

*"It takes practice to really integrate it...we want it to be really internalized...something that you're living and breathing every single day...a continual diving deeper so that it becomes something that we use and it's not just considered an add on or an extra...if the arc was trauma informed practices, then that would be what I would share in the weekly information. And when I check in weekly, then that would be my focus. This year I tried to keep going back to that focus of the year. I think that's the way that it becomes something that we do and who we are as opposed to 'Oh, I went to that and that was really great.' And then three months later I'm not really doing it anymore because I've gotten back into my old routines. And so to me, I would see the great value in that." (Administrator, 1.13.20)*

*"I really think that going more into ourselves and our own experiences and how that shows up...Really unpacking, how does our own experience, our own self, our own culture, trauma or not, how does that show up within us? And then how does that then parlay itself into the classroom?" (Administrator, 12.19.19)*

### **More Educators Need Opportunities to Attend PLCs and/to Receive Individualized Coaching on ROCK Content**

284 educators and community partners participated in a ROCK activity in 2019-20. However, only 23 educators attended both a PLC and either the ROCK 201 training or a webinar. Additionally, as discussed above only 6 teachers received individualized coaching throughout the year. Research on adult learning shows that adults learn most effectively through experiential learning where they can reflect upon, talk about and practice how to apply the new information they are learning to their daily practice. Additionally, adults learn best in contexts that involve peer learning and collaboration.

We encourage the ROCK leadership team to discuss pathways that would allow more educators to participate in learning about ROCK in multiple formats (trainings, webinars, yoga, PLCs). Providing more educators with the opportunity to attend small group PLCs to reflect on strategies and insights gained from large group trainings would be particularly valuable. Additionally, providing individualized coaching for educators would provide them with an even more in depth understanding of the ROCK material and strategies.

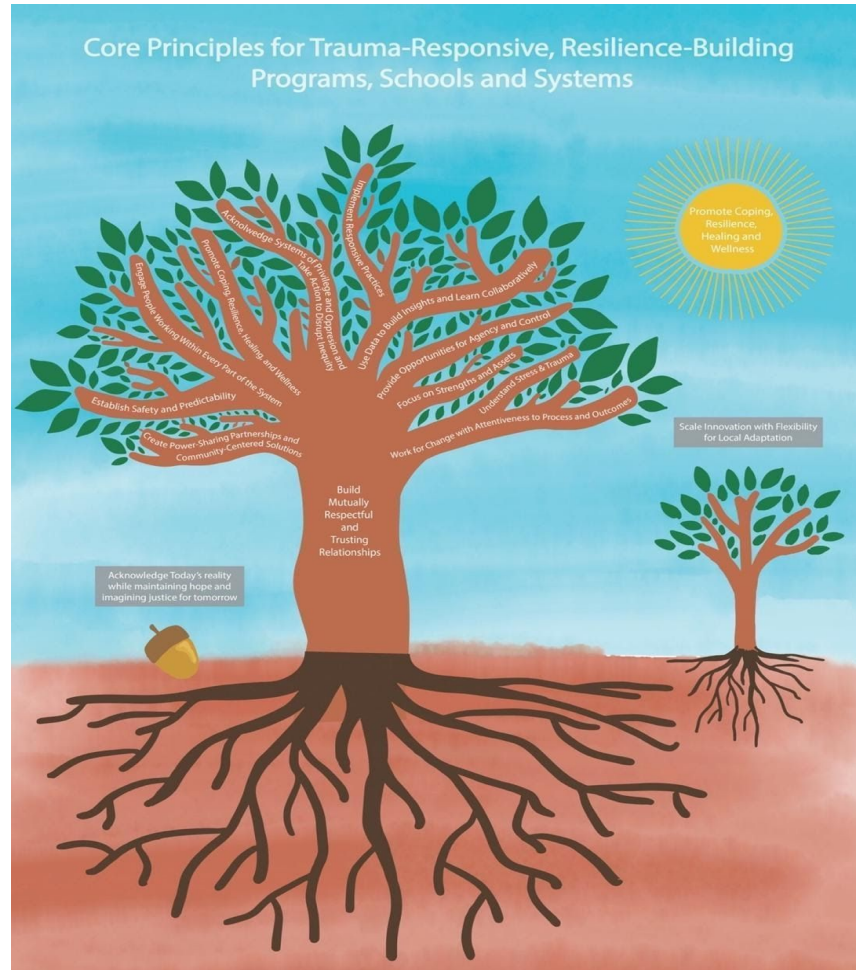
**To strengthen the implementation of ROCK language, content and practices throughout the system, it is critical that the ROCK community:** (1) Agree on a set of core principles to guide the ROCK project, and, (2) Integrate the current focus on trauma and resilience with the growing interest throughout the ROCK community to center equity and anti-racist practice in professional learning. We briefly describe each of these important recommendations below.

### **Use Core Principles to Guide the ROCK Project**

The content at the center of the ROCK project—stress and trauma, trauma-responsive practice, resilience and anti-racist practice—requires thoughtful planning and implementation of all adult learning experiences to prevent the ROCK trainings, PLCs and other associated activities from causing unintended harm. ROCK is not only about content but also about *how* we intentionally choose to work together to create a trauma-responsive early childhood system. Using core principles to guide ROCK moving forward is recommended as a practice that can support the various people and agencies involved to remain focused on the mission and values associated with this work. The following principles were created by Nicholson and her colleagues<sup>5</sup> as a guide for individuals and groups striving to create trauma-responsive, resilience building anti-racist programs, schools and systems serving young children and families. Their development has been informed by many sources including the ongoing project design, communication and data collection/analysis process for ROCK. These principles have not yet been formally introduced to the ROCK leadership team and/or ROCK participants. The construction and implementation of core principles must be guided by the voices of the ROCK community and emerge from a collaborative decision-making process. As a result, these are offered to inspire this future discussion with ROCK leadership/participants.

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<sup>5</sup> **Source:** Nicholson, J., Kurtz, J., Leland, J., Wesley, L. & Nativ, S. (in press).



**Integrate a Commitment to Equity and Anti-Racist Practice throughout ROCK.** Although ROCK has always had a commitment to discuss race and racism in relation to trauma, the recommendation is to include discussions of race, racism and anti-racist policies and practices throughout every ROCK training and activity instead of separating this content into one or two specialized trainings/activities (e.g., Race Equity training, White Fragility book group). Towards this end, we suggest the following tasks for the ROCK leadership team and ROCK community revisit such documents as the ROCK Theory of Change, Training content, PLC curriculum guide, Organizational Self-Study Tool and other ROCK resources, and revise them as needed to deepen their alignment with the language, concepts and critical elements of culturally responsive, anti-racist, anti-bias, decolonizing and equity committed policies, approaches and practices.

**Learn the characteristics of white supremacy culture and antidotes for disrupting them.** This is an important step in learning to be inclusive of more diverse cultural values, norms, practices and ways of knowing and being in relationship; knowledge that can inform revisions to ROCK content and professional learning activities (see Appendix K).



**Work together to identify the beliefs, approaches and actions (the antidotes) that ROCK, as a community, will commit to strive towards to disrupt white supremacy culture, racist policies and inequitable outcomes for Oakland’s young children and their families.** These commitments need to be transparent and integrated into core documents including the ROCK Core Principles, ROCK Theory of Change, NTC’s Equity Coaching Rubric and the ROCK Organizational Self-Study Tool (see Appendix L for an example of what this could look like for the Core Principles).



## To What Extent Did We Meet the Goals Outlined in the ROCK Logic Model?

**Goals for Teachers:** The following chart outlines the specific project goals and whether there is evidence for the goal being met.

<b>Which Goals did we Meet for Teachers?</b>		
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Goals</b>	<b>Evidence?</b>
Short Term	High rates of PLC Attendance	✓ Quantitative Evidence
Short Term	Knowledge and Practice of Self-Care and Mindfulness Strategies	✓ Qualitative Evidence ✓ Quantitative Evidence
Short Term	Better Understanding of Trauma	✓ Qualitative Evidence
Short Term	Implementation of Trauma-Informed Strategies in the Classroom	✓ Qualitative Evidence ✓ Quantitative Evidence
Short Term	Making the child visible behind the behavior	✓ Qualitative Evidence
Medium Term	Increased awareness of own and children's trauma triggers	✓ Qualitative Evidence
Medium Term	Decreased job stress	✓ Qualitative Evidence
Medium Term	Increased job satisfaction	✓ Qualitative Evidence ✓ Quantitative Evidence
Medium Term	Better parent teacher interactions	
Medium Term	Enhanced effectiveness of program support and systems	✓ Qualitative Evidence
Long Term	Teacher and provider satisfaction and retention	✓ Qualitative Evidence

## ROCK 2020-2021 Theory of Change

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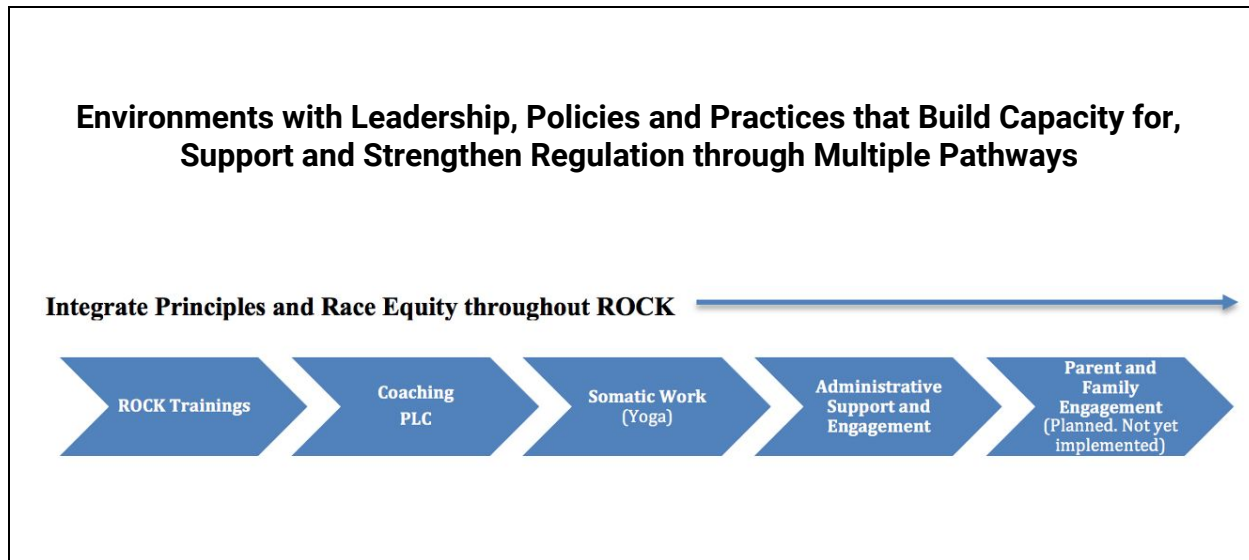
Moving forward, we are blending elements of the ROCK Logic Model and Driver Diagram and integrating insights from this year's evaluation into an updated ROCK Theory of Change. We want to be able to tell the story about not only the 'what' but also, the 'why' driving the ROCK project and the different elements we are coming to understand are most important to include in working for the desired changes for children, teachers/staff, families and the early learning environments in Oakland. Below, we describe the essential inputs, drivers of change and associated activities in addition to the short, medium and long term goals we believe will lead to the desired outcomes.

**Vision:** Increase resilience and healthy social emotional development of children and adult in trauma responsive, anti-racist and healing-centered environments.

### **Being Responsive to the Current Context: Reframing ROCK to be Acutely Sensitive to the Neurobiology of Stress and State Dependent Functioning**

The current conditions where children, families and educators in Oakland, across the nation and throughout the world are experiencing the ongoing impact and consequences resulting from COVID-19 have created a uniquely challenging and historical context. For participants in the ROCK community, added to the stressors brought on by the coronavirus, are additional layers of stress and trauma resulting from the nation's other pandemic, structural and institutional racism, as threats to people of color, especially Black children and adults, are increasing across the US. Compounding these threats are the loss of employment, housing insecurity and other impacts of poverty and the historic fires impacting communities across the state. As a result, our theory of change begins with a goal to create environments with **leadership, policies and practices that build capacity for, support and strengthen regulation** through multiple pathways (see Appendix N for a comprehensive discussion of state dependent functioning and pathways to regulation).

## Key Elements of 2020-2021 ROCK Model



All ROCK activities will be designed and implemented with an **understanding of state dependent functioning and incorporate pathways to regulation**. They will also be designed to align with an understanding of adult learning best practices (see page 12). Further, this year all ROCK content will be revised to incorporate a focus on anti-racism (language, concepts and practices).

- **ROCK Trainings.** Trainings will be delivered using both pre-recorded (Teachable modules from the Center for Optimal Brain Integration) and live trainings. Whenever possible, content will be revised to integrate a focus on race equity. Training topics will be determined by the leadership team in response to the needs of the teachers and community. Several trainings are likely to be continued (Neurobiology of stress and trauma: Overview; Trauma-informed practices; Culturally responsive self-care; Race equity: Addressing bias), however, teachers may also have an opportunity to select from a wider range of COBI trainings available through Teachable.
- **Staff meetings/PLC/Coaching.** Teachers and administrators will have systematic time and support to engage in reflection, conversation and interactive activities (e.g., role playing) to learn how to apply the ROCK content to their practice. Having this time for 'sense-making' is a critical element to support adults' learning. Without it, the content in the trainings is unlikely to be implemented in practice. Some of the knowledge and skills to be strengthened during this time will include: (a) Identifying personal stressors and experiences with trauma, (b) building body awareness, (c) practicing regulation strategies and planning and discussing how to use TIP practices with a focal child. Whenever possible, it is recommended that mental health professionals are included in the PLCs.

- **Yoga.** Trauma-informed yoga will continue to be offered to support adults to reduce stress, to strengthen mindfulness skills, to build body awareness and to reduce the pain associated with musculoskeletal injuries and other common work-related consequences of working in early childhood settings (Jacobson, 2019)
- **Administrative Support and Engagement.** Administrators will participate in ROCK trainings and to the extent possible, PLCs. Each site leader will identify program strengths and areas for growth, set short and long term goals and track progress against their goals.
- **Parent and Family Engagement.** Discussions about this element of ROCK will begin in earnest this year. Possible activities may include: (a) a training for parents/families on using ROCK practices at home, (b) integrate ROCK content into parent/family communication and (c) integrate ROCK content into parent/family engagement activities (pending impact of COVID).

Key Practices	Will Lead to....
<p>Expand access to ROCK trainings and encourage participation of administrators, instructional assistants and other staff</p> <p>Build a shared language to talk about trauma, race/racism, resilience and self-care</p> <p>Integrate a focus on race equity into all ROCK Activities</p> <p><b>For Teachers and Administrators...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strengthen body awareness/sensory literacy, use regulation strategies</li> <li>● Disrupt deficit language and perspectives and shift to strength-based approaches</li> <li>● Use strategies to address bias (e.g., perspective taking and individuation/focal child)</li> </ul> <p><b>For Children</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Build body awareness/sensory literacy and practice regulation strategies</li> <li>● Have access to sensory and rhythmic activities and play</li> </ul> <p><b>Parents/Families - TBD</b></p>	<p><b>Teachers/Administrators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improving self-regulation</li> <li>● Disrupting their actions based in unconscious bias</li> <li>● Being more responsive and attuned to children and buffering their stress through co-regulatory support</li> <li>● Increasing instructional time by decreasing amount of time needed to manage dysregulated children</li> <li>● Reducing activation of their own stress response systems thus reducing the release of harmful stress chemicals in their bodies</li> </ul> <p><b>Children</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increasing children’s feelings of safety and belonging</li> <li>● Increasing children’s time and opportunities to learn as well as their health and overall well-being</li> </ul> <p><b>Parents/Families - TBD</b></p>

## SPOTLIGHTS

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### Trauma Responsive Teaching Practice

A preschool teacher was inspired by many of the ROCK concepts and brought them back to her classroom. Her supervisor explains how she used the information she gained from ROCK when responding to a young child who was struggling in her classroom:

The focus child that this teacher picked for ROCK (in the ROCK PLC) is a child who we need a lot of gaps filled in for. She was able to let me know that she wanted to meet with the family and we all met together. She created a visual schedule for this little guy because we found out that he was having anxiety with transitions and we found out it's because of a switch and caregivers that he had no control over. She made him things like a visual schedule, created established routines and made a social story to help him get through it. And she was really collaborating with that family to increase the amount of time that he's was able to be away from his primary caregiver because he knew when that she was going to come back. These are some of the strategies that she learned in ROCK. Also like the belly breathing and offering him sensory strategies and giving him a lot of cues before his primary caregiver's going to leave the room—here's the picture of her, she's going to come back—and we gave him the picture and then when his caregiver came back into the room, he gives the photo to her. So she used really discrete strategies that she learned being part of ROCK. She's brought them into the classroom and we can actually see the effects working with this kiddo (Administrator, 12.19.19)

### Learning about Emotional Literacy through ROCK

A preschool teacher shared the following about participating in the online ROCK trainings. She participated in the first series of 6 trainings and liked them so much, she took the series again when it was offered to the community.

“I learned a lot. For example. I remember when the training talk about the brain. When the child, when they have trauma. I learned how the brain works. In our center, we have a lot of child with trauma. Now I understand very clear when they have it, how to work with them because before we try to work with a child during this particular time, but I learned that I had to give it time to them to calm down. That's another topic that I learned how to work with the families. I learned that how to communicate with the families, how to understand them, because sometimes they don't want to share information because they have trauma in their background. Now, I learned, I had to give them the opportunity to share information, not to ask too many questions in the beginning... We have to work with them very close, and be kind because in that way, they're going to share information about the child, about the kids.

This is something I learned in the training because before I don't understand why some families don't want to share information. They don't want to speak with us.

You know what, before, when I have, this particular problem with the kids I feel very frustrated because I feel like I don't have patience with them because I didn't know how the brain works. Now I understand they need time. They need to calm down to start to change the behavior. And also I learned how to help them when they calm down to speak about the problem, about what happened when they feel that stressed. You know what, in that particular training I almost cried because in my center we have a lot of kids with different trauma. It's hard for us to work with them, but now when I understand what happened in their lives, in the brain, I feel like, I need to help them...when I was a child, sometimes I try to explain something to my parents, to my teacher, but I don't have the correct word to express myself because nobody is teaching me to express my feelings. In the trainings, I learned that that's very important to teach the child to express the feelings. Not just asking, what happened? Why you cried? No, no, no, no. In different ways, like in books, songs, playing, dramatic plays, in different areas in the classroom. We have many chances to teach them expressing the feelings. That's why, when I took the training, I said, Oh my goodness, as a teacher, I have the opportunity to teach them and change their lives. I love the trainings. Continue, continue with the training. We need it."

## Centering Conversations of Race and Racial Equity into ROCK

**"The teachers asked if we could talk more deeply about race.** We put that on our invisible parking lot. I mentioned it in the closing of our PLC and a lot of teachers were excited about it. A lot of people critiqued the curriculum (Big Day) for the children. How is it supporting children who have had trauma in their lives? The conclusion was, "It's not really." We didn't have time to dive into it more deeply because we were out of time. This was a foreshadow of their interests to go a little deeper." (ROCK PLC Check in Call, 10.8.19)

"So as we pick up next year, maybe, so they used the first curriculum, the trauma informed curriculum, and now, I'm thinking about the idea that given, especially what's gone on in the last month, **the culturally responsive, but also infusing some conversations around race, racial injustices, racism, those, those kinds of conversations.** That's something that our program has also focused on and struggled with, some of those challenges. So I think that potentially is something that could be integrated into the conversations" (ROCK Leadership Team member, 6.16.20)

"Somehow **weaving in the intersections between trauma and healing, resilience and race and equity...**I'm just thinking about ways in which next year it could be folded in together. **So it's not two different things...**it shouldn't be like, okay, one PD is about equity and one PD is about trauma informed practices. It shouldn't be like that. It should be together all the time, one in the same." (ROCK PLC Facilitator, 6.18.20)

**“I found that talking about equity and efficacy was really beneficial...it is very important for us to connect with the children because we have such a vast variety of races and cultures within Oakland Unified...I found it very helpful that we were learning of these things because Oakland unified consists of various cultures and ethnicities. And it's so important, especially in this moment right now”** (Teacher, 6.24.20)

### **ROCK Supporting Teachers to Disrupt their Inaccurate Assumptions and Reactivity with Children**

An administrator explains that the practice of choosing an individual child to discuss in the ROCK PLC, led her teachers to build understanding and empathy for children, especially those with behaviors they perceived to be challenging. In one instance she describes below, by discussing a child and learning more about her, the teachers were able to surface and **disrupt their inaccurate assumptions about her** (that the child was older than she actually was) so they could be more empathetic and responsive to her needs. This strategy of spending time learning about a child as an individual has been identified in the research literature as an effective way to address unconscious bias. Note how she acknowledges the teachers' feelings within the discussion, an important part of the process of building trust for this type of reflection and learning to take place.

“One child that we discussed, in one of our classrooms, this child, you know, only being two, but looked like she was five and not having the language to be able to articulate a lot of things that was that she was going through. And the teachers kind of looking at her engaging, what they felt she should be able to do based on her physical appearance. And then just being able to have that discussion like, ‘listen, I know she's big. I know that she looks like she should be able to do certain things, or she looks like she should be able to respond to things differently or have a different set of tools. She's really only two.’ So being able to break it down for them, acknowledge what they [the teachers] were going through, because clearly they were thinking that she shouldn't be doing this, or she should be stronger in these areas.

But then just ‘look at where she was and what stage of development she was actually in and what was realistic and what wasn't’, but it wasn't until we were actually able to sit down and kind of case manage a little bit, that's kind of what it felt like. Just to be able to put things back into perspective because there's limited opportunities for us to really sit down and talk about it. So the ROCK PLC presented a space for us to be able to just kind of sit there and work through things. (6.22.20)

Another administrator reports that ROCK helped an instructional assistant not take a child's dysregulated behavior personally and to offer the child support instead of removing the child from the room in a punitive way:



“ROCK is just kind of opening their eyes again and helping them remember so that when things come up, they're less likely to take it personal. I've noticed that especially with one of the instructional assistants who just seems a lot more open to the students that are dysregulated, I've seen that he's actually more likely to ask them to come sit with him more as a support as opposed to removing them in a punitive way” (1.13.20)

And in a third example, an administrator describes how a teacher who was being physically hurt by a child and on the verge of leaving her job, decided to stay because of the support from her supervisor and the ROCK strategies:

“One of the teacher's, Liz, said that had that culture [inspired by ROCK] not been in place because she had some children who are trying to physically harm her, and she was being harmed, with bruises and things like, she would have left. And but because of the ROCK strategies, she leaned in to specific children, and loved on them even more, used trauma informed practices.” (12.10.19)

These stories suggest that ROCK strategies can be used in early learning programs as part of a comprehensive plan implemented with aims of disrupting or preventing exclusionary discipline.