

# Coach

## SPOTLIGHT: Un Buen Comienzo (UBC) Program



Implementation country	Chile
Program target	Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten/Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers and students
Type of implementation	NGO-led (Fundación Educacional Oportunidad and Harvard University) with support from Chilean government
Scale of intervention	1,904 students, 81 schools, 81 directors, and 207 educators and assistants
Years of implementation	2008–present
Budget	Approximately US\$75 per child per year (approx. 45,000 Chilean pesos) <sup>1</sup>

### Program Goal

*Un Buen Comienzo* (A Good Start) (UBC) program aims to improve the experiences of students in Early Childhood Education (ECE) and focuses on four areas of intervention: *language, socioemotional development, health, and family involvement.*

### Educational Context

Chile is a middle-income country with significant educational inequality, especially across socioeconomic levels. Chilean children under age 5 from low socioeconomic backgrounds have significantly higher rates of socioemotional problems and language

<sup>1</sup> Gudrais, Elizabeth. 2009. "The Developing Child." Harvard Magazine. <https://www.harvardmagazine.com/2009/03/the-developing-child>.

delays than children from families at the top of the country's income distribution.<sup>2,3</sup> Despite increased access to ECE in Chile, the quality of the pre-school environment remains low.<sup>4</sup> In response to this context, UBC was developed by Fundación Educacional Oportunidad and Harvard University with government support to improve the quality of ECE by leveraging the roles of teachers and school leaders.

## Program Description

Un Buen Comienzo's model focuses on teacher and school leadership development to improve the quality of ECE, ultimately improving students' language and emergent literacy levels in participating program schools. The UBC model adopts a theory of change that focuses on these three elements:

- 1 Instructional time.** UBC aims to promote effective use of time in the classroom and minimize passive learning through strategies such as read-aloud and interactive discussions.
- 2 Effective interactions.** UBC contributes to effective student-teacher interactions in the classroom specific to the domains of the [Classroom Assessment Scoring System \(CLASS\)](#), which include *Emotional Support*, *Classroom Organization* and *Pedagogical Support*. UBC contributes by (a) providing training and support to ECE educators on practices related to these three domains and (b) supporting teachers to constantly

observe and improve their classroom teaching relative to these three domains.

- 3 Attendance.** Missing school negatively impacts learning. Teachers participating in the UBC program implement strategies that reduce chronic absenteeism.<sup>5</sup>

In 2011 UBC adopted the [Continuous Quality Improvement \(CQI\)](#) methodology as part of driving ongoing program improvement.

## Whole-Child Development

In addition to contributing to the development of oral language, reading, and writing, UBC focuses on socioemotional development and on the general well-being of children participating in the program by coordinating with local health services and communities.

2 Behrman, Jere, David Bravo, and Sergio Urzua. 2010. "Encuesta Longitudinal De La Primera Infancia: Aspectos Metodologicos Y Primeros Resultados." Government of Chile, Department of Economics, Santiago. <https://www.crececontigo.gob.cl/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/INforme-ELPI-2010.pdf>.

3 Schady, Norbert, Jere Behrman, Maria Caridad Araujo, Rodrigo Azuero, Raquel Bernal, David Bravo, Florencia Lopez-Boo, Karen Macours, Daniela Marshall, Christina Paxson, and Renos Vakis. 2014. "Wealth Gradients in Early Childhood Cognitive Development in Five Latin American Countries." GCC Working Paper Series, 14-02. Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, DC. <https://publications.iadb.org/publications/english/document/Wealth-Gradients-in-Early-Childhood-Cognitive-Development-in-Five-Latin-American-Countries.pdf>.

4 Arbour, MaryCatherine, Hirokazu Yoshikawa, Sid Atwood, Francis Romina Duran Mellado, Felipe Godoy Ossa, Ernesto Trevino Villareal, and Catherine E. Snow. 2016. "Improving Quality and Child Outcomes in Early Childhood Education by Redefining the Role Afforded to Teachers in Professional Development: A Continuous Quality Improvement Learning Collaborative among Public Preschools in Chile." Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness (SREE) Spring Conference Abstract Template. SREE, Rockville, MD. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED566990.pdf>.

5 For more information on UBC's theory of change, see <https://fundacionoportunidad.cl/un-buen-comienzo/>.

## Design of Teacher Professional Development Component

Fundación Educacional Oportunidad's team works with and accompanies preschool teachers and school leaders intensively for two years, enabling them to implement UBC strategies and the CQI methodology in their ECE classrooms. ECE classroom teams participate in collaborative opportunities that enable them to reflect on their current practices, discuss classroom experiences, and receive ongoing feedback about their performance.<sup>6</sup>

### For Teachers:

- ✓ **Classroom teams.** The classroom teams are the main feature of the professional development model at UBC. The teacher teams take part in monthly training cycles to reflect on their current practices, watch instructional videos, and observe UBC facilitators model effective practices. These trainings have a bimonthly cycle: 3 training sessions between April and June, and 3 between August and October, for a total of 12 sessions over the 2 years.
- ✓ **Coaching.** Using a coaching-specific protocol, each coaching session involves three parts: a pre-observation meeting, a classroom observation, and a post-observation meeting at which the teacher and facilitator discuss UBC strategies and action plans for improvement.<sup>7</sup>

### For Pedagogical Leaders:

- ✓ **School leader meetings.** School leaders receive intense support to implement the intervention throughout the two years. School leaders form part of a UBC-organized Collaborative Network. The network organizes the work of classroom, school, and district leadership teams and other stakeholders around the common purpose of maintaining a continuous improvement process for ECE. Specifically, the network (a) ensures that schools and school districts support UBC strategies and methodologies; (b) fosters learning focused on improving pedagogical practices and leadership; and (c) supports schools in maintaining strong levels of language learning.<sup>6</sup>
- ✓ **School leader coaching sessions.** School leaders meet regularly with their peers in the school district to reflect and discuss strategies to increase instructional time, improve attendance, and support their teachers in using effective practices to strengthen student-teacher interactions and language development in the classroom. During these meetings, school leaders first share the work at their schools related to each of the three components. Next, consulting with their peers, school leaders use the data from their schools to inform ongoing decision-making.<sup>8</sup>

6 Fundación Educacional Oportunidad. 2019. "Programa UBC: Trabajo colaborativo que fortalece la calidad integral de la educación inicial." UBC, Santiago, Chile. [https://issuu.com/funoportunidad/docs/resumen\\_abc\\_t1\\_a\\_os\\_p\\_ginas\\_web](https://issuu.com/funoportunidad/docs/resumen_abc_t1_a_os_p_ginas_web).

7 Treviño, Ernesto, Elisa Aguirre, and Carla Varela. 2017. "Un Buen Comienzo para los niños de Chile." Universidad Diego Portales, Dirección de Publicaciones (Publications Directorate), Santiago, Chile. <https://fundacionoportunidad.cl/wp-content/uploads/libro-un-buen-comienzo-para-los-ninos-de-chile.pdf>.

8 For more information on UBC's overview by HundrEd, see <https://hundred.org/en/innovations/2-un-buen-comienzo-improvement-network#baf60105>.

## Alignment with Coach Principles

### Coach

#### *Un Buen Comienzo (UBC) Program*

<b>Tailored</b>	✓	Facilitators provide <b>tailored</b> coaching and feedback to teachers based on classroom observations and engage in collaborative reflection.
<b>Focused</b>	✓	The monthly teacher trainings are <b>focused</b> and emphasize strategies for teaching language, self-regulation, socioemotional learning, and health and nutrition to students.  Using a specific protocol, coaching sessions focus on specific pedagogical practices that teachers can improve.  UBC uses the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) for internal and external evaluations.
<b>Practical</b>	✓	The TPD delivered to teachers is <b>practical</b> and provides opportunities for reflection, modeling effective practices, and feedback to improve teaching practices identified using CLASS.
<b>Ongoing</b>	✓	Teachers receive <b>ongoing</b> assistance from the UBC team support for two years, during which they participate in 12 bimonthly training sessions, regular coaching support, and 1–1 coaching visits by facilitators.

## Program Results

The program's evaluation was carried out in nine school districts in 2014–2015. The sample included in the evaluation comprised 19 classrooms that participated in the program and 35 classrooms in the comparison group. The study included the evaluation of approximately 630 children from both groups.

- 1** *Quality of teaching practices.* In all domains of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), teachers in the program had scores that improved between the initial and the final assessments two years later. The program teachers' scores were higher in all three CLASS domains than the increases in the scores of the teachers in the comparison group.
- 2** *Student learning outcomes.* Compared to the comparison group, the children participating in the program had better results in emergent reading and writing and in emergent reading comprehension.
- 3** *Socioemotional development.* UBC children exhibited significantly higher levels than those of the comparison group in all the evaluated dimensions. The program children exhibited less aggressive behavior and were less anxious, shy, and fearful.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Fundación Educacional Oportunidad. 2019. "Programa UBC: Trabajo colaborativo que fortalece la calidad integral de la educación inicial." UBC, Santiago, Chile. [https://issuu.com/funoportunidad/docs/resumen\\_abc\\_11\\_a\\_os\\_p\\_ginas\\_web](https://issuu.com/funoportunidad/docs/resumen_abc_11_a_os_p_ginas_web).

## Want to Learn More?

- To learn more about UBC's development and results, view [these slides that present a case study based on the UBC program](#).
- To read more about how the UBC model leverages scientific evidence about what works in ECE, [view this article featuring the program](#).

## Program Documents Available (English and Spanish)

To view additional details related to the UBC program, select a link below.

<i>Background information</i>	<i>Teacher and coach materials</i>	<i>Evaluations of the program</i>
<p>An overview of the program by HundrED.org</p> <p>A Spotlight on UBC by the Carnegie Foundation</p> <p>A report on UBC experience</p>	<p>A brief from Fundación Educacional describing effective practices for teaching language that are utilized by the UBC program</p> <p>A brief on how UBC responds to the educational challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic</p>	<p>An experimental study on the impacts of UBC</p> <p>A research paper on improving ECE featuring UBC</p>

For more information on the *Un Buen Comienzo* program, visit [Fundacion Educational's website](#).

 [Access Coach Tools and Resources](#)

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