



Nebraska's legislators, private sector interests and taxpayers can be confident about their investment in Sixpence because of its commitment to rigorous, independent and statistically valid quality measurement.

Dozens of separate quality criteria enable Sixpence's technical staff to work individually with each funded program to build on their strengths, address specific local challenges and help them excel in the service they provide for parents, infants and toddlers.

# Evaluation & Guidance

## Assessment and expert assistance build quality programs

To offset the potential effects of the achievement gap facing so many of Nebraska's youngest, most vulnerable children, our state needs programs that meet high standards for professionalism, efficiency and effectiveness. This is why each Sixpence program is rigorously evaluated on the caliber of its personnel, the quality of its administration, its engagement with parents and families and the developmental outcomes of the children served. But it is not enough to simply measure the performance of these programs and demand compliance with Sixpence's high-quality standards. Sixpence's support staff uses this data to work closely with funded programs and offer expert assistance to grow their effectiveness in helping infants, toddlers and their parents thrive.

## How Sixpence measures quality in its grantees

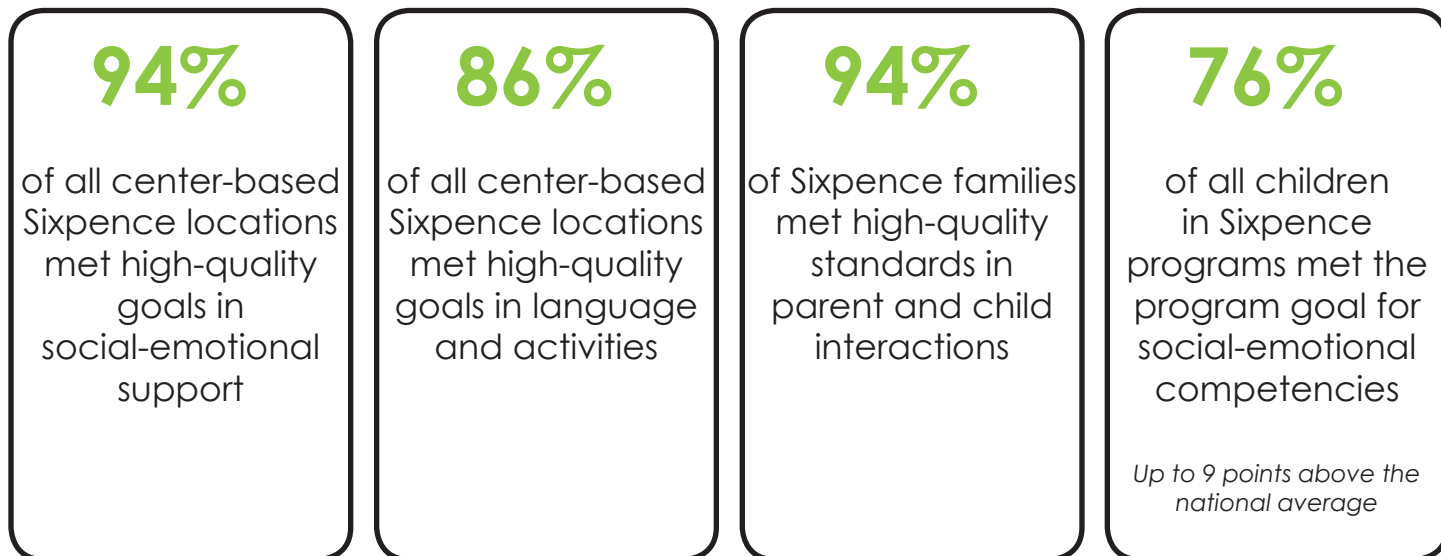
Since Sixpence awarded its first round of grants in 2008, the Trustees have contracted with expert evaluators at Munroe-Meyer Institute at the University of Nebraska Medical Center to provide a comprehensive, scientifically credible analysis of the programs it funds. This annual evaluation measures:

- **Parent-child interactions** reflected in video of the parent and child during free play with a parent educator providing feedback (KIPS assessment)
- **Family strengths** related to parents' ability to support their children's self-confidence, learning and attachment, family resiliency, social connectedness and other positive factors (annual FPF survey)
- **Children's progress across several major developmental domains** including cognition, physical, language/literacy, basic mathematical sense and other areas (TS GOLD assessments)
- **Children's social-emotional competencies** related to attachment to caregivers, initiative and self-regulation (DECA assessments)
- **Children's communication skills** related to vocabulary comprehension and language production (PPVT-IV assessments)
- **Children's health outcomes** as reflected in the availability of medical services, immunizations, correct car seat usage, regular wellness checkups, prenatal care and positive maternal health practices (annual survey customized by Munroe-Meyer Institute at UNMC)
- **Teacher effectiveness** in creating emotionally supportive center-based environments (CLASS assessments)
- **Overall quality of key aspects of center-based programs** including administration, parent engagement, program structure and activities, management of the physical space and other factors (ITERS-R assessments)
- **Overall quality of family engagement (home visiting) services** focusing on promoting healthy parent-child interactions, respect for family culture and autonomy (HoVRS assessments)

## What the most recent 2016 Sixpence evaluations tell us

More than 60% of all children participating in Sixpence faced three or more risk factors that can, cumulatively, represent substantial challenges to their healthy cognitive, mental, social-emotional and physical development.

Despite these challenges, Sixpence continues to move more children and their families toward healthier outcomes:



## Using assessment data to promote continuous quality improvement

Every year, the evaluation team with Munroe-Meyer Institute presents the Sixpence Board of Trustees with a comprehensive analysis of the performance of each Sixpence-funded program. This information directly informs the Board's decisions regarding new or continuation funding, and serves as an objective measure of accountability for the public and private dollars invested in each community partnership.

The most significant benefit of this data, however, lies in its ability to illuminate the various challenges or obstacles that confront all Sixpence-funded programs—even the most exceptional—at one time or another. Sixpence's expert technical staff analyzes this evaluation data to work directly with program administrators and personnel in addressing problems on a case-by-case basis. Sixpence's technical staff is comprised of highly skilled professionals with a thorough background in program and budget management, early educational practice, curriculum design, family engagement and parent coaching, among other skills. These personnel visit with more than 30 grantees in communities across the state to ensure that Sixpence-funded programs not only meet the statutory and administrative requirements defined by the Nebraska Legislature, state agency partners and private investors, but ensure they continually grow their ability to help parents become the best and most effective caregivers and educators of their youngest children.

