Promise Early Education: Tracking Social and Emotional Development
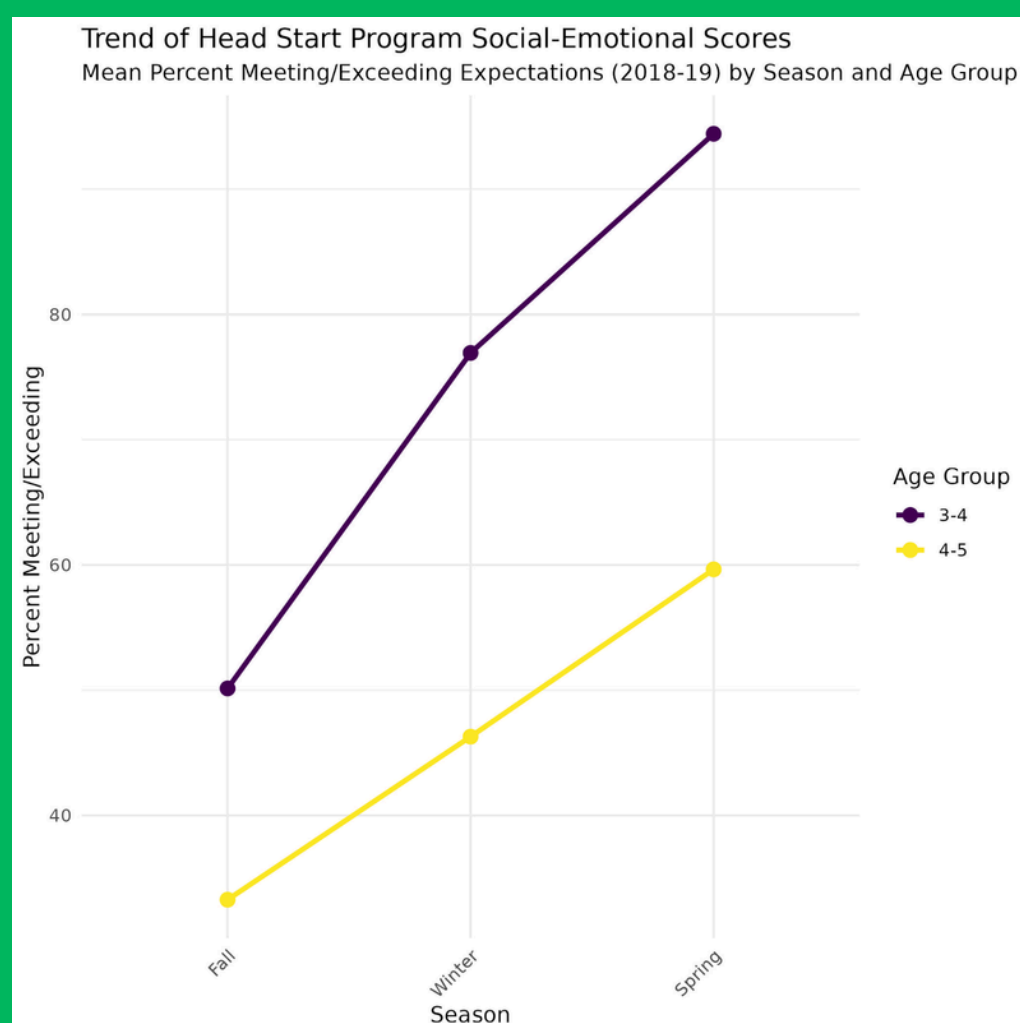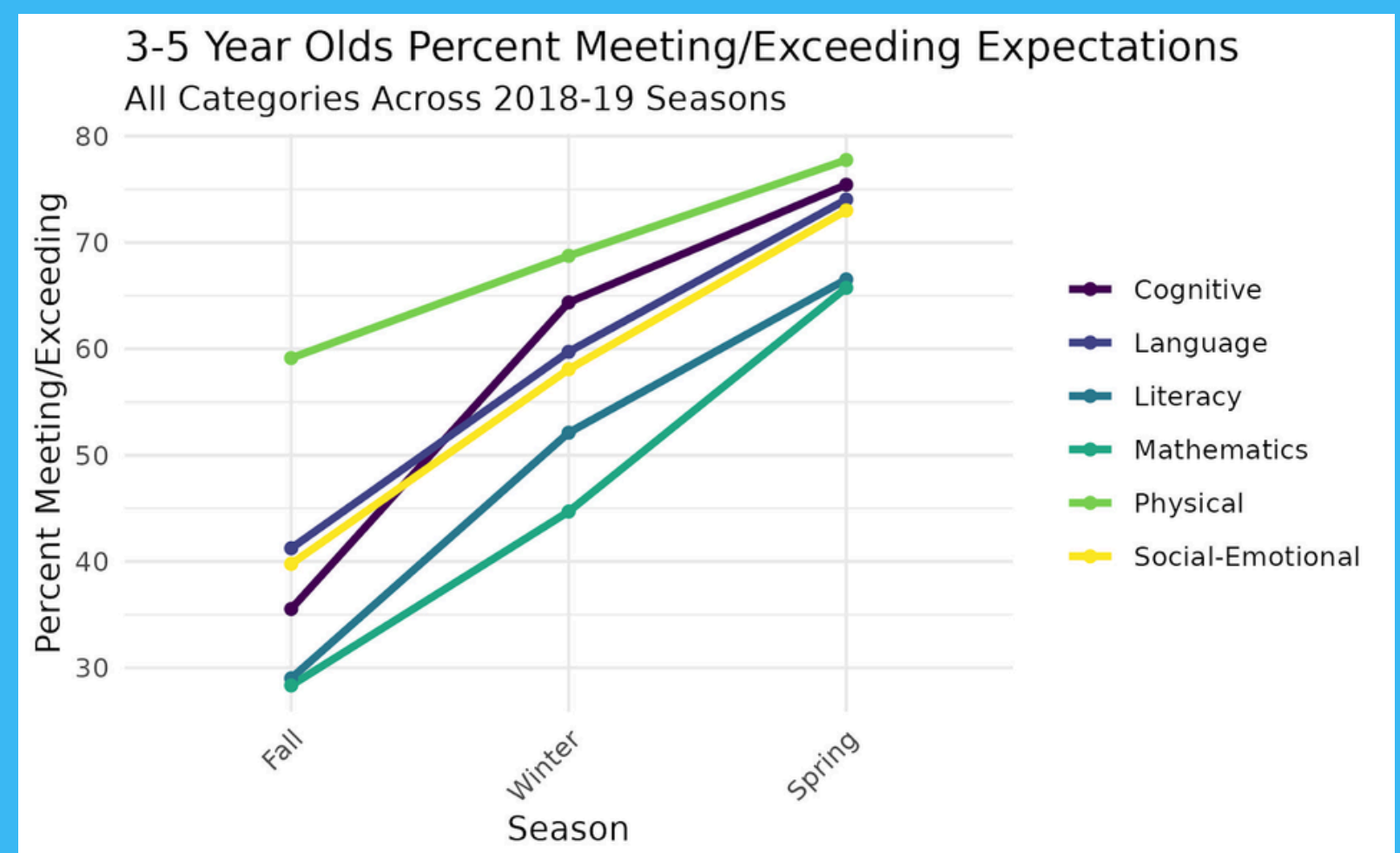
GOLD® Assessment Data | 2018-2019

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GROWTH ACROSS DEVELOPMENTAL AREAS

Promise Early Education is a Head Start/Early Head Start program serving children ages 0–5 in Maine. Using the GOLD® Assessment System, the program tracks developmental progress in six key domains. This graph presents a broad view of gains in 2018–2019.

While Physical and Language development began relatively high (~80%), areas like Literacy and Cognitive, which started lower (~40–50%), experienced steeper increases. By spring, all domains surpassed 85%, with Social-Emotional scores reaching ~91%. These results reflect the program's comprehensive and sustained impact across all areas of early learning.

3-5 Year Olds Percent Meeting/Exceeding Expectations
All Categories Across 2018-19 Seasons

Trend of Head Start Program Social-Emotional Scores
Mean Percent Meeting/Exceeding Expectations (2018-19) by Season and Age Group

AGE MATTERS: BENCHMARK GAPS AND PROGRAM REACH

This graph highlights social-emotional development for two age groups within the program. While both groups improved, 3–4-year-olds consistently outperformed their older peers—starting near 52% and rising to ~94% by spring. The 4–5-year-olds, by comparison, began at ~33% and reached just over 60%.

Rather than reflecting a program failure for older children, these differences likely stem from the increasing rigor of benchmarks with age. Still, the results emphasize the program's role in supporting children through transitional developmental phases, and raise important questions about the alignment of assessment standards.

CLOSING GAPS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS EQUITY

Fall assessments revealed wide variability—especially among older children—suggesting uneven starting points. But by spring, score distributions tightened, and the 3–4 group reached near-uniform high performance.

This convergence suggests that Promise's programming not only facilitates individual growth but helps reduce early developmental disparities. Interventions appeared effective regardless of a child's initial score, offering a compelling case for early support that meets children where they are.

Distribution of Head Start Program Social-Emotional Scores
Percent Meeting/Exceeding Expectations (2018-19) by Season and Age Group