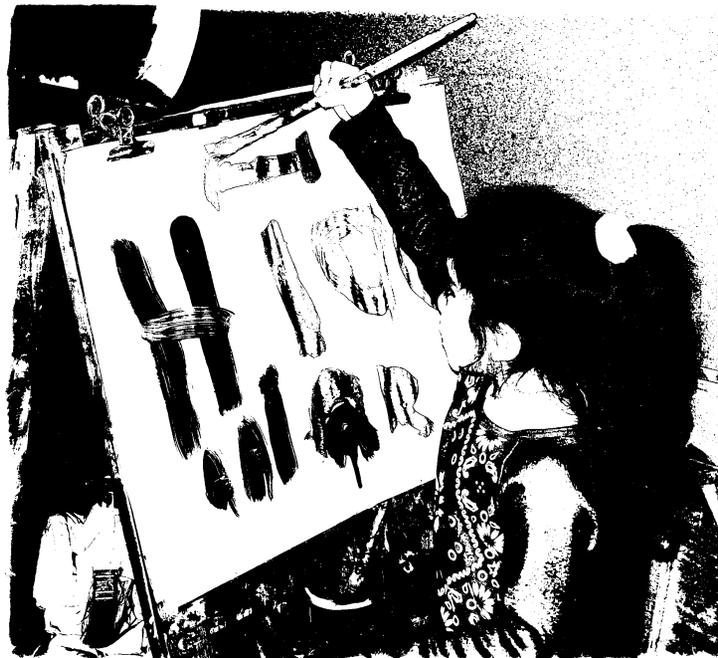




# **COLORADO PRESCHOOL PROGRAM**



**2005 REPORT TO THE COLORADO LEGISLATURE**

# Colorado Preschool Program

2005 Legislative Report

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### Colorado Department of Education Organizational Commitment:

The Colorado Department of Education dedicates itself to increasing achievement levels for all students through comprehensive programs of education reform involving three interlocking elements: 1) [High Standards](#) for what students must know and be able to do; 2) [Challenging Assessments](#) that honestly measure whether or not students meet standards and tell citizens the truth about how well our schools serve children; and 3) [Rigorous Accountability Measures](#) that tie the [accreditation](#) of school districts to high student achievement.

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"I am thrilled that my child, who had been following in the footsteps of my older children, who are not doing well in school, was chosen for this program.

My son is such a good reader already in kindergarten. He asks me to read to him every day. Now I am volunteering in the schools two days a week and helping out. I thank you and the State of Colorado."

Lake County R-1 Parent



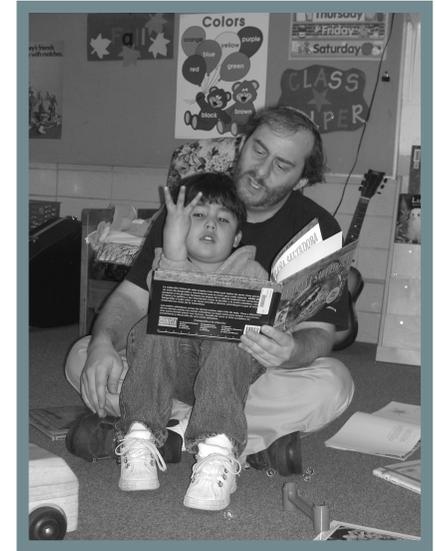
## Introduction

Increasing achievement levels for all students is a top priority for Colorado, and the Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) is one of the important cornerstones of that effort. The General Assembly established the Colorado Preschool Program to serve children who lack overall learning readiness due to individual and family risk factors. These risk factors increase the likelihood that children will fail to achieve their full potential, will need special services in the later years, will drop out of school at an early age, and will become involved in criminal activities (Barnett et. al., 2004). By providing a quality early childhood program and family support the Colorado Preschool Program is proving these risk factors do not have to preclude high achievement.

- ◆ In the 2004-05 school year, CPP is authorized to serve 9,050 children.
- ◆ 154 out of 178 (86%) of the school districts in Colorado now participate in CPP. Participation on the part of school districts is voluntary. Four additional districts are waiting for an expansion of CPP in order to apply for slots.
- ◆ With 8,050 slots, the Colorado Preschool Program has the capacity to serve 12.4% of Colorado's four-year-old population. (Source: Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Colorado Demography Office)
- ◆ In the 2004 school year, school districts identified an additional 6,336 children who were CPP eligible, but because of a lack of CPP slots school districts were unable to serve these children .
- ◆ 1,500 preschool slots and 500 full-kindergarten slots were cut from the Colorado Preschool Program in the 2003 Legislative Session. These slots are to be restored in the 2005-06 school year.
- ◆ One thousand of the available 9,050 CPP slots must be used to provide full day kindergarten services.
- ◆ In 2004 the Colorado Preschool Program documented a match that enabled Colorado to "draw down" an additional \$7.3 million in Federal revenue. These additional Federal funds supported TANF and the Child Care Block Grant.

## Colorado Preschool Program Collaborations

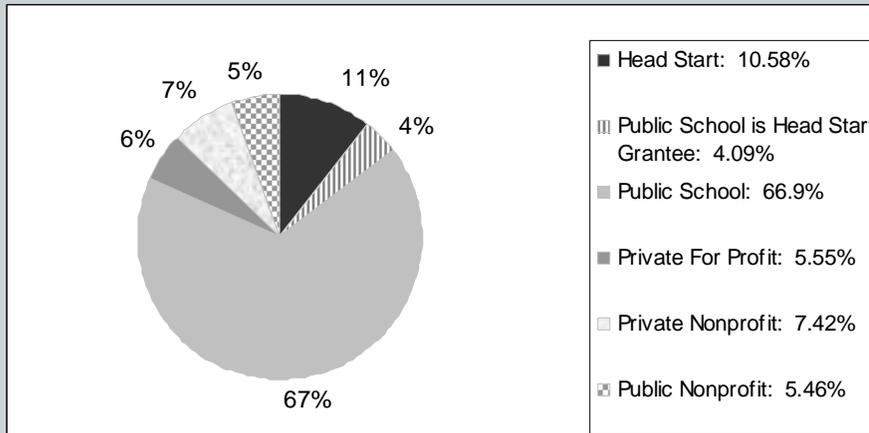
The CPP legislation gives communities the freedom to decide locally who is best qualified to deliver CPP services. The intent of the law is to provide children and their families with the highest quality services available. As a result, children funded in the Colorado Preschool Program are served throughout the state in Head Start programs, private for-profit programs, non-profit programs and programs within public schools. Whether a school district chooses to collaborate or not depends on the resources available within the community. A major responsibility of the CPP district council is to develop a process that allows community early childhood programs to apply for the opportunity to deliver CPP services. One step in this process is to develop and issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) to the community. District councils are required to send out RFP's at least once every five years to assess whether alternative community providers are available.



CPP is funded to provide an early childhood education program to children that averages 2 1/2 hours a day, four days a week, for nine months.

The Colorado Preschool Program has children placed in 49% of the licensed preschool programs within Colorado. A preschool is defined as a part-day program.

In addition, CPP has children placed in 17% of the licensed child care centers in the state. A center, by definition, provides longer hours of care than a part-day program.



Note: 49 school districts have no other licensed preschool or child center in the community to contract with, 37 school districts contract out all of their allocated CPP slots and 42 school districts provide services in both community and public school settings.

Colorado Preschool Program 2004 Public Provider Partnerships

"I believe a strong beginning is as much a part of a student's final educational success as are the high school courses.

Preschool provides for a wonderful beginning, giving young students much more than academics. In a safe learning environment they are more able to become self-assured, productive students who feel great about themselves."

PK-12 Principal, Otis Public Schools

"If we really want to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty, then we must invest in the care and education of young children whose life circumstances seriously limit their opportunities for success."

[Science, Policy, and the Young Developing Child: Closing the Gap Between What We Know and What We Do.](#)

Jack P. Shonkoff, M.D.

*"This has been a wonderful experience for my child. Her English has improved very much. She cries when she is sick and can't come to school.*

*I did not graduate from school so I really want my daughter to."*

**Parent in Estes Park**

## Who Are the Children Served in the Colorado Preschool Program?

CPP is designed to serve "four- and five-year-old children who lack overall readiness due to significant family factors ... and who would benefit from participation in the state preschool program." Eligibility for children to participate in the program is determined by criteria that have been established by the state legislature and local district councils.

In the 2003-04 school year, school districts indicated that children served in CPP had an average of 3.3 risk factors present in their lives.

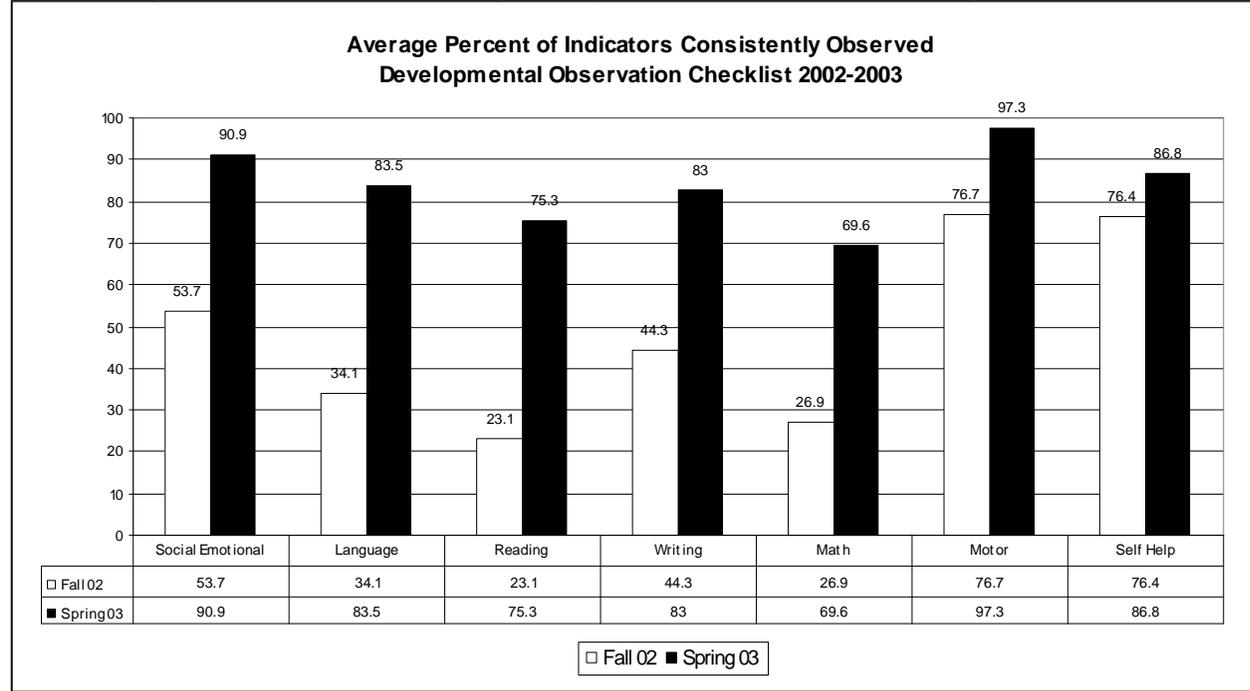
| Statutorily Defined Risk Factors Used to Establish Eligibility for the Colorado Preschool Program | Percentage of Children Qualifying Under this Risk Factor |
|---|--|
| Child is eligible to receive free or reduced-cost meals   | 72%  |
| In need of language development including learning English as a second language                   | 34%  |
| Child has been identified with poor social skills   | 31%  |
| Child's parent has not successfully completed high school   | 27%  |
| Either parent was less than 18 and unmarried at the time of the child's birth                     | 14%  |
| Frequent relocation of the child's family   | 12%  |
| Receiving services from CDHS as neglected or dependent children                                   | 7%   |
| Drug or alcohol abuse present in the family   | 7%   |
| Child's family is homeless  | 4%   |
| An abusive adult resides in the home of the child   | 4%   |

## CPP Provides a Critical Opportunity for Learning

Communities across the state report that the preschool years are critical years in a child's education. Given the appropriate learning opportunities that preschool can provide children acquire the early language, mathematical, social, artistic and physical abilities that lay a strong foundation for their later learning in elementary school and beyond. In addition, as children begin to succeed in preschool, they build self-confidence as learners and get ready to do their best in school.



Percentage of Growth Documented by Thompson R-2J School District During the Preschool Year



“Data gathered from portfolios, checklists, and anecdotal records which are used to track progress throughout the year indicate:

- Children who only scribbled lines and circles are now drawing recognizable pictures and printing their names,
- Children who would not talk even when spoken to are now naming peers as friends and sharing information with teachers
- Children who couldn't sit next to another person without kicking or poking can now attend in a group without incident
- And children whose block constructions were flat on the ground are now building elaborate 3-dimensional castles with stories to go along with them!”

Custer County School District CPP Coordinator



*Beyond saying my child has benefited from the preschool program, I believe without it, he would be entering kindergarten now with an IEP for speech. At three years old, he spoke only one word. Now, his language is varied and filled with depth. He is able to talk as he thinks. This preschool program and all of its dedicated professionals have left a mark on his development that will never be forgotten! Thank you!*

**Academy #20 Parent**

## Reduced Special Education Placements, Fewer Grade Retentions and Higher Graduation Rates for the CPP Class of 1988

This summer three psychologists from Greeley completed a longitudinal records review of 4 cohorts of children who had participated in the Colorado Preschool Program. The first cohort of children was funded by CPP in the 1989-1990 school year and is now one year post high school. The other three cohorts were subsequently funded by CPP, with the youngest cohort now in 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

The researchers reviewed records to determine which children were placed in special education, how many children were retained in a grade and , when appropriate, what the graduation rates were for these previous CPP participants. They found...

**CPP participants were placed in special education less often:**

The archival data indicated that 8.9% of previous CPP participants were staffed into special education and remained there. They contrasted this with 12% special education placement rates within their own district and data from the Chicago Longitudinal Study (CLS) that reported 24.6% special education placement rates for an at-risk population that received no early childhood education program.

**CPP participants were retained less often :**

They also determined that 11% of the CPP students were retained a grade. National rates of grade retention by eighth grade have been estimated to be as high as 28% (McCoy & Renolds, 1999).

**CPP participants had higher graduation rates:**

Finally, in the cohort of CPP children that were old enough to finish the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 87% of the students graduated. This is higher than the high school graduation rate of 81.8% reported for the general population in the State of Colorado in 2002. Moreover, the CLS study reported a 38.5 % graduation rate for those at-risk students who did not participate in an early childhood program.

Principal authors of the study are:

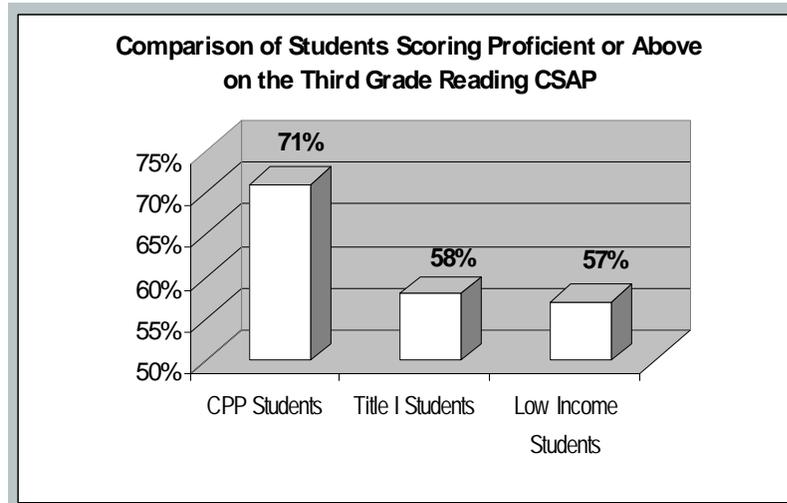
R. Brett Nelson, Ph. D., Licensed Psychologist, adjunct graduate faculty UNC, co-director Greeley-Evans predoctoral internship

Anthony Baldo, Ph.D., Licensed Psychologist, adjunct, UNC Early Childhood Psychologist, Greeley-Evans Schools

Michelle Athanasiou, Ph. D., Licensed Psychologist, Professor of School Psychology, UNC

## CPP: Helping Children Achieve Their Academic Potential

School districts across Colorado consistently report that when the most disadvantaged students in the state are provided a high quality early childhood experience in the Colorado Preschool Program, they can perform at a level similar to their peers. At the right is a graph that compares the performance of CPP children on the 2003 Third Grade Reading CSAP, to those children who are in Title I programs, and those children who are eligible for free and reduced cost meals.



McClave RE-2: 100% of CPP graduates scored proficient or above on the third grade 2003 CSAP, compared to 67% of children who were not CPP graduates.

Garfield RE-2: In second grade 44% of students who participated in CPP performed above the national average on the MAPS reading assessment and 55% of CPP students performed above the national average on the MAPS math assessment. On both tests students were also scoring above district averages.

Monte Vista C-8: When looking at district assessment results on QRI and/or Running Records on Leveled Books, we have clear evidence across time of the "Power of Preschool" .

|           | CPP | District | Differ- |
|-----------|-----|----------|---------|
| May, 2000 | 95% | 75%      | +20     |
| May, 2001 | 90% | 84%      | +6      |
| May, 2003 | 92% | 82%      | +10     |

Huerfano RE-1: 93% of CPP graduates scored proficient or above on the 3rd grade reading CSAP, compared to 71% of the children who did not attend preschool.

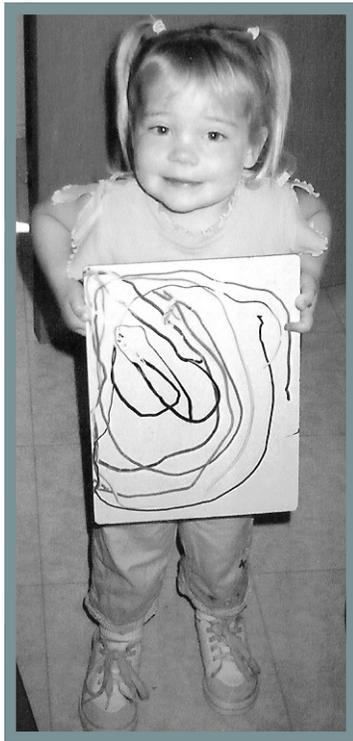
Boulder Valley School District: In 3rd grade CPP graduates scored 13% higher than children eligible for free and reduced cost meals on the CSAP. In 4th grade CPP graduates scored 9% higher than the same population, and in 5th grade CPP students scored 16% higher on the CSAP.

Colorado Springs #11: 26% of children who attended CPP funded preschool entered kindergarten on an ILP. Comparatively 40% of those who did not attend preschool entered kindergarten on an ILP.

71% of reporting school districts indicated that CPP graduates scored better on the third grade CSAP than their district wide averages. This is particularly important when one considers that the children eligible to participate in CPP must be identified to be "at-risk."

## The Wisdom of Investing in Early Childhood

The Colorado Preschool Program capitalizes on a period of time in children’s lives when basic abilities can be enhanced, and challenges can be identified and addressed before they become full-blown problems. Below is a chart that compares the cost of providing one year of CPP to the average costs of other types of remediation and support. It is clear it is less expensive to provide a year of preschool than to remediate problems later. In addition to the clear academic and social benefits to children, research-based evidence demonstrates benefits to the rest of society though improvements to the K-12 system, reduction in crime, and greater contributions to the economy.



“ Early environments play a large role in shaping later outcomes. Skill begets skill and learning begets more learning. Early advantages cumulate; so do early disadvantages. Later remediation of early deficits is costly, and often prohibitively so.”

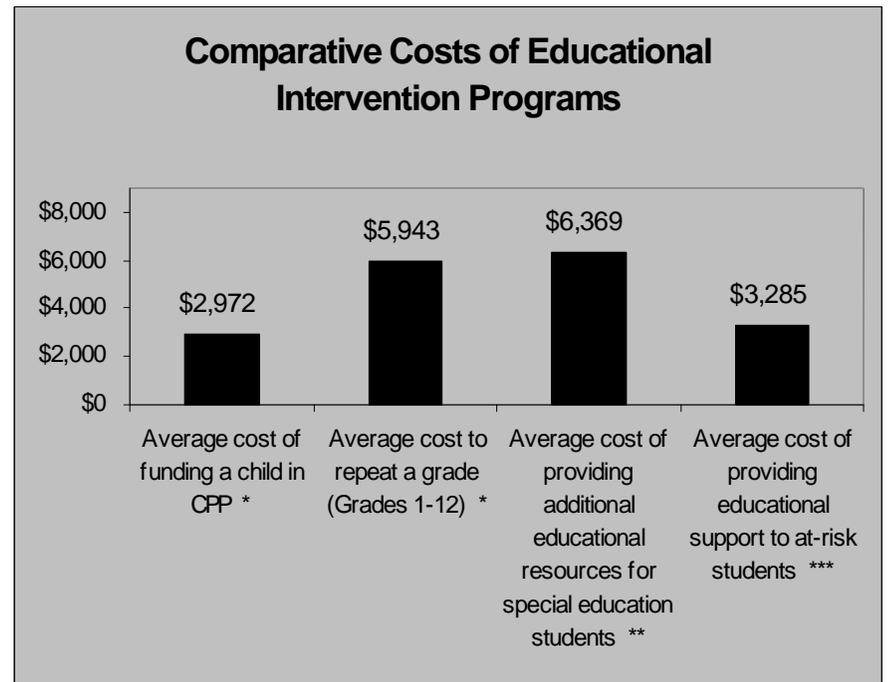
Dr. James Heckman,  
2000 Nobel Laureate in Economics

“Poor children who fail to achieve their full academic potential are more likely to enter adulthood without the skills necessary to develop into highly productive members of society able to compete effectively in a global labor market. Less skilled, less productive and earning less, when these children become adults they will be less able to help us sustain public retirement benefits systems such as Social Security...”

Robert Lynch  
Chairman of the Dept. of Economics  
Washington College

“Children who start behind, stay behind...And children who begin school on the right foot tend to perform well in later years, having developed both necessary skills and self-confidence.”

The Trust for Early Education.



\* Based on average Per Pupil Revenue for FY 2003-04 per <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/sfdetails.htm>

\*\* Estimated average yearly cost per special education student in Colorado for FY 2001-02 per Charm Paulmeno, Director of Grants Fiscal Management Unit.

\*\*\* Colorado School Finance Project, Calculation of the Cost of an Adequate Education in Colorado Using the Professional Judgment and the Successful School District Approaches, January, 2003

## Voices of Colorado Preschool Program Families

Parent engagement is an essential component of the Colorado Preschool Program. Research indicates that parent involvement has a more positive impact if it begins early in a child's educational experience. Because parents are their children's first teachers, CPP requires programs to have a written plan for parent involvement. Parents are asked to enter into an agreement with the program that specifies what this involvement looks like (i.e. volunteering in the classroom, reading to children at home, and attending parent meetings) Each CPP district council is also charged with the responsibility of supporting families by connecting them to appropriate community resources. In this way, they can help meet the specific needs of the families they serve. Not only does this increase positive outcomes for children but it also demonstrates to children the value their parents place on education. In turn, parents realize the important role they play in their own child's development.



### To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to express my deep gratitude for the pre-school program at The Village. My 4 year-old son has benefited both educationally and emotionally from the excellent education resources and the care and concern of a fully committed school staff.

It would be completely accurate to say that my son and I wouldn't be together today without The Village Pre-school program. I am a single father who recently was given custody of my son by the Arapahoe County Department of Human Services. Unfortunately, our current system is geared towards single mothers and their issues and needs. There is no such safety net for fathers in my situation. The Village pre-school has become an integral part of our lives, allowing me to be able to increase my work hours and be more productive, always have access to someone to talk to when I need it, parenting classes to help me through new child-related issues as they arise, and the security of knowing that my son is getting the best education available.

Thanks for everything. We will miss you in the fall.

**Littleton Parent**

*If there were no preschool my daughter won't know how to act with kids and know basic education skills before entering kindergarten.*

**Adams #14 Parent**

*Thank goodness for the CPP grant. I didn't know how else we could send her to pre-school. She is doing so well this year and we are excited to see her progress in kindergarten.*

**Julesburg Parent**

*Me ensena como ayudar a mis hijos en la casa cosas de la escuela. (It has taught me how to help my children at home with the things they are learning in school.)*

**Boulder Valley Parent**

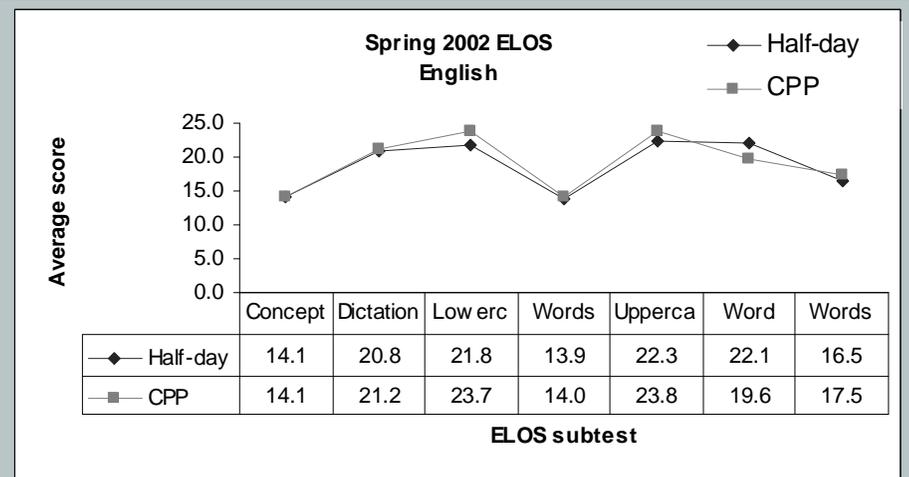
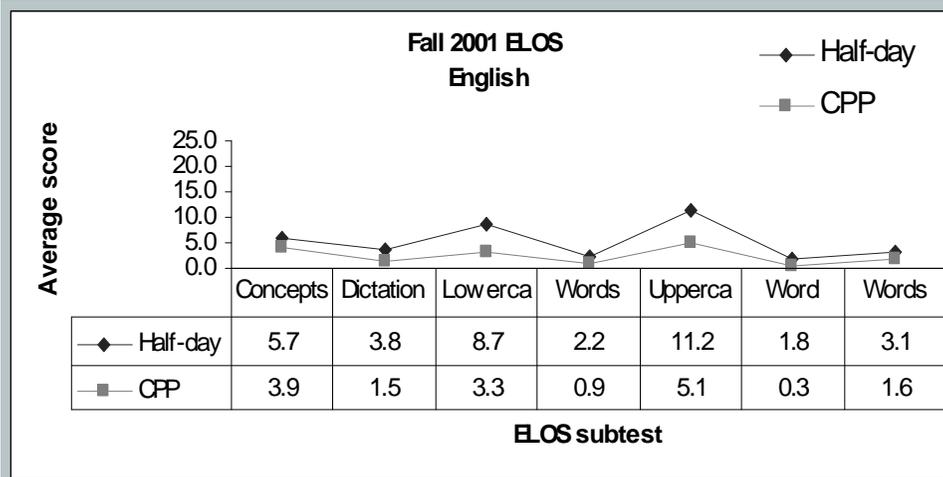
One can see by the comments the parents have made on our questionnaire how much growth parents have seen in their children in all areas. The Preschool gives the parents so much opportunity to participate in their child's education. We give parents and families a positive first start.

Yuma CPP Coordinator

## Colorado Preschool Program Funded Full-Day Kindergarten

The Colorado Preschool Program is authorized to serve 1,000 children in full-day kindergarten. Strong academic progress is being reported in this component of CPP as well.

John Crawford and Ann Church have been studying the academic achievement of children attending half-day kindergarten programs and children attending CPP funded full day programs in the Denver Public Schools. They reviewed children’s scores on the seven subtests of the English Language Observation Survey (ELOS), which is administered to kindergarten students during the fall and spring of the kindergarten year. What they found is that while CPP funded full-day kindergarten children begin the year with lower average scores on the ELOS, by the end of the school year they have closed this “preparation gap” and they are performing at the same level as their peers who attended half-day kindergarten. The researchers report that in DPS “full-day students showed an overall pattern of improvement from pre-to-post tests that exceeded progress demonstrated by half-day students.” Similar results are also evident for the 2002-03 school year.



**Canon City:**  
Children attending full-day kindergarten funded by CPP on average attend better than their grade level peers in kindergarten, first grade and their second grade years.

**Colorado Springs #11:**  
Children in CPP funded full-day kindergartens show an overall average 7.1 months growth at the end of first semester. Comparatively, their peers in half-day programs show an overall average of 5.9 months growth at the end of first semester.

**Brighton:**  
Teachers report that, as a group, full-day kindergarten students made significantly more progress than half-day students.

**Harrison:**  
21.6% of half-day kindergarten students were placed on ILP's vs. 14.8% of full-day kindergarten students.

## “Results Matter” Receives Federal Grant to Study Early Childhood Outcomes

On September 30, 2004, the Colorado Department of Education’s Early Childhood Outcomes Project, Results Matter, received notification of a grant award in the amount of \$824,489 from the U.S. Department of Education.

This grant will provide the means to:

- ◆ Measure short range child progress during the early childhood years using authentic on-going assessment systems
- ◆ Measure long-range outcomes such as linkages to CSAP outcomes or graduation/transition rates
- ◆ Measure and analyze consumer feedback including parent engagement in their child’s program, parent perceptions of progress, parent ratings of program quality and kindergarten teacher perceptions of child readiness
- ◆ Measure program and classroom quality and analyze data linking program quality indicators to child outcomes



The Results Matter project plan currently focuses on participation of the Colorado Preschool Program, Part C (infant-toddler intervention) and Part B—Section 619 (preschool special education). As the project evolves, however, it is hoped that other partners in the early childhood care and education system will choose to collaborate in its development and implementation. This grant will support critical next steps in actualizing the proposed model through provision of expert technical assistance in research and evaluation, child and program assessment and data collection system implementation.

### Grant Objectives:

- ◆ To build consensus across the state on child and family outcome areas and strategies
- ◆ Identify feasible and defensible measurement and reporting approaches
- ◆ Build local capacity to collect and report data
- ◆ Build capacity to use data for program improvement.

SRI International, formerly the Stanford Research Institute, is the actual grantee. SRI, who wrote the proposal on behalf of the Colorado Department of Education, will continue to provide consultation and technical assistance during the implementation phase.

For more information, contact a member of the Results Matter Work Group:

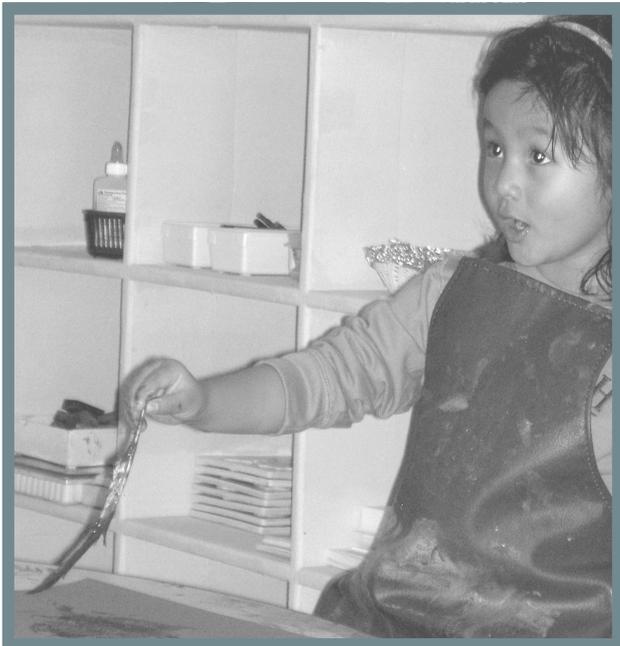
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The Colorado Preschool Program would like to thank John Crawford and Ann Church for sharing their work on the effects of full-day kindergarten participation in Denver Public Schools.

We would also like to thank R. Brett Nelson, Anthony Baldo, and Michelle Athanasiou for sharing their analysis of the records review of previous participants in the Colorado Preschool Program in Greeley.

And we would like to thank Karen Weaver and Ameer Duncan for their special contributions to this report.



## One last thought....

I like school because my teacher reads me books.  
We go outside and go to the gym. I get to hang up  
my stuff instead of dragging it all around.

Widefield #3 CPP Student

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