

# At a Glance

## Results of student and classroom assessments in CDEPP classrooms

October 2010

"The positive findings have been consistent across years, giving us greater confidence in the positive impact of CDEPP for preparing children to learn."

-- Dr. Bill Brown, University of South Carolina

### Background of Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP)

CDEPP is a pilot full-day educational pre-kindergarten program for at-risk four-year-olds residing in the 37 plaintiff districts in the school funding lawsuit, *Abbeville County School District et al. vs. SC*. CDEPP was established in response to the ruling which directed the State to provide more resources to the plaintiff districts to meet the educational needs of young children in poverty.

#### Eligibility:

- Children residing in the plaintiff districts who attain the age of four years by September 1 and whose families meet the income requirements (Federal free- or reduced-price lunch program and/ or Medicaid).
- Public and private providers whose programs meet specific quality requirements, including student: teacher ratio, teacher qualifications, DSS licensing or approval, curriculum, and educational staff participation in professional development designed to meet the needs of at-risk young children.

#### Administration:

- Public school program is administered by South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE).
- Private program is administered by Office of First Steps to School Readiness (OFS).
- For the previous three years, the SC General Assembly has appropriated funds to the EOC to evaluate CDEPP. The EOC has annually contracted with the University of SC to serve as a partner in the evaluation and to conduct individual student assessments over time of CDEPP participants.

### CDEPP Student and Classroom Assessments

- The October 2010 report presents the results of students and classroom assessments conducted in school year 2009-2010. Additionally, an analysis of student assessments was done to determine change in language, achievement, and behavioral development between children's early pre-kindergarten and early kindergarten years.

#### Summary of Results

- Using a sample of 276 CDEPP students with both pre-kindergarten and kindergarten assessment findings, the results showed that children in CDEPP made modest and meaningful progress in language, achievement, and social and behavioral development.
- These gains were maintained as children moved from pre-kindergarten to kindergarten.
- The positive findings have been consistent across years giving us greater confidence in the positive impact of the CDEPP for preparing children for kindergarten.
- On the other hand, evaluations of CDEPP classrooms showed evidence that instructional quality could be improved with targeted professional development. In essence, student achievement gains could be even greater.

#### Recommendations

- Despite negative economic conditions, the General Assembly should continue funding CDEPP and similar pre-kindergarten programs and when funds are available, expand the program in both public schools and private centers statewide. Across years and cohorts, modest yet meaningful child gains provide evidence of the success of CDEPP in preparing young children who are at-risk for school failure for kindergarten.
- Given the existing multi-year sample of 276 children who were enrolled in CDEPP further longitudinal evaluation of those students, as compared to a matched sample of similar children who did not attend a full day program, would help to show if differences in children's language, achievement, and behavior may be

related to CDEPP participation. Standardized test scores (e.g., PASS scores) and other information, such as grades, grade retentions, and special education placements, may be of assistance in understanding the relationship between pre-kindergarten participation for at-risk students and their future academic and social success in South Carolina.

- Our classroom observations with the *CLASS Pre-K* have indicated that on the domains of Emotional Support and Classroom Organization those CDEPP classrooms were similar to other preschool classrooms in previous investigations. Nevertheless, for the domain of Instructional Support with accompanying dimensions of concept development, quality of feedback, and language modeling, the ratings were lower than previous investigators have reported. A continuous improvement approach to pre-kindergarten educational services indicates that targeted professional development and technical assistance might be helpful to local preschool personnel in the area of instructional support and high-quality teaching interactions. State level early childhood administrators should carefully consider how to enhance professional development activities and technical assistance to support the efforts of local pre-kindergarten personnel.

#### **Additional Information**

For additional information, contact the EOC at (803) 734-6148.

A copy of the "Results of Student and Classroom Assessments in School Year 2009-10 for the Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP)" is available online at <http://www.eoc.sc.gov/evaluationsinprogress/fouryearoldkindergarten.htm>. Previous years' summary reports and working documents can also be found online.