

June 2010: Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts promotes children's school readiness and future achievement



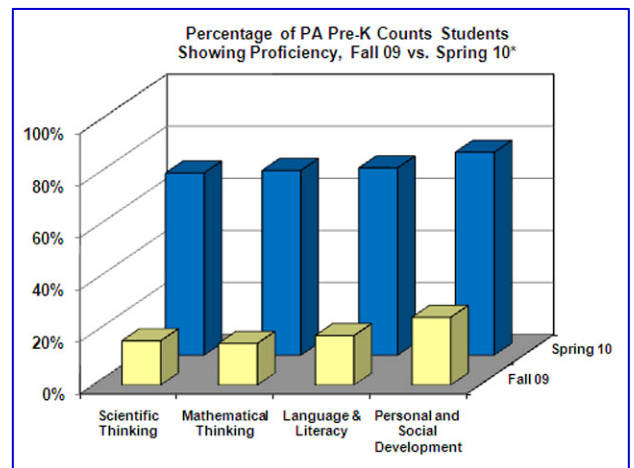
Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts provides high quality pre-kindergarten services to 11,800 three & four year olds in the commonwealth so that they can enter school ready to learn and succeed in school and in life. Third year outcomes show that Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts children are:

- Making outstanding progress throughout their participation in the program;
- Entering kindergarten ready to learn; and
- Continuing to achieve in school as they enter kindergarten and first grade.

Nearly every child (over 98 percent) showed age-appropriate or emerging age-appropriate proficiency in literacy, numeracy, and social skills after attending PA Pre-K Counts in 2009-2010.*

More than 70 percent of children who attended Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts finished the school year with age-appropriate proficiency in literacy, numeracy and social skills.*

- The percent of children who were proficient in **Scientific Thinking** increased from 17% in Fall to 70% in Spring.
- The percent of children who were proficient in **Mathematical Thinking** increased from 16% in Fall to 71% in Spring.
- The percent of children who were proficient in **Language and Literacy** increased from 19% in Fall to 72% in Spring.
- The percent of children who were proficient in **Personal and Social Development** increased from 17% in Fall to 78% in Spring.



Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts has been a real benefit to our schools and the community. We are seeing a significant difference in students who attend PA Pre-K Counts versus students who have not. [Those who have] been part of the program have entered Kindergarten more prepared academically and behaviorally.

- Mark Bollman Elementary Principal, Tussey Mountain School District, Bedford County

Parents rate high satisfaction with PA Pre-K Counts, engage in their child's learning.

In a survey of 2,700 parents whose children are participating in PA Pre-K Counts, at least 90 percent reported that

- The background of teachers and educational program met their expectations;
- Teachers provided them with new ideas on how to support their child's development at home; and
- Information on their child's performance motivated them to change how they teach their child at home.

PA Pre-K Counts has made an enormous difference in Dylan's behavior, desire to learn and social skills. He can write his name and tries to write the names of his friends and family. He recognizes and tries to write all the letters of the alphabet and numbers. The staff has been very successful in teaching him to follow rules and behave in school while encouraging his enthusiasm for learning. We feel much more confident about sending him off to kindergarten next fall. Dylan wouldn't have been able to attend a preschool if this program wasn't available here in the mountain area. This experience is a solid foundation for his education.

- Robin B. Fike, Parent, Fayette County

* Based on PA PKC grantee reports for 9,439 children in Work Sampling Online reporting tool

PA Pre-K Counts graduates continuing progress in kindergarten, first grade

Grantees report that children who participated in PA Pre-K Counts continue to perform on par with or better than their peers in kindergarten and first grade. For example:

- Between 36% and 57% of children who participated in PA Pre-K Counts scored above the average scores across five domains measuring numeracy and early literacy for all kindergarten students entering the Penn Cambria School District in Fall 2009.
- By the end of the 2009-2010 kindergarten year in the Pottstown School District, 94% of children who participated in PA Pre-K Counts were at grade level in early literacy, while 85% of the total kindergarten population was at grade level.[#]
- Every child (100%) who participated in PA Pre-K Counts entered first grade in Harrisburg SD in 2009-2010 with age-appropriate or emerging age-appropriate early literacy skills[#], while 87% of children who did not participate in PA Pre-K Counts entered with age-appropriate or emerging age-appropriate early literacy skills.

According to an evaluation by the OMG Center for Collaborative Learning, although school districts that enrolled PA Pre-K Counts children are the highest risk school districts in the state, those districts serving the largest number of Pre-K Counts children had a fewer percentage of children entering kindergarten in 2008-2009 with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) (5.8%) than districts enrolling no PA Pre-K Counts children (8.1% had IEPs).

In my PA Pre-K Counts classroom I have seen the program impact the children and families a great deal. Many of the children entering the program in my classroom had delays, had never been in a classroom environment, have behavioral difficulties, and/or had parents who are unsure of the impact they have as the child's first teacher. With all the work from both home and school [parents and I] as a team ensure a successful educational path for [their children.]

- Felicia Meitzler, Teacher, Community Services for Children, Lehigh County

Quality program design and accountability is producing positive results for children

Comprehensive accountability includes a system of reporting, site monitoring and classroom environment ratings. Grantees submit monthly and quarterly reports which are reviewed by Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) staff. Preschool Program Specialists conduct site visits and evaluate each grantee on how well it has met program requirements for reporting, communications/interactions, meeting and training attendance, continuous quality improvement, teacher qualifications, funds management, classroom environment, enrollment and attendance of the children, and program review. Independent assessors also evaluate individual classrooms using the nationally recognized Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales-Revised (ECERS-R). Grantees also submit periodic reports of each child's progress.

Providing a quality early education continuum

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts is part of a quality early education continuum serving children from birth to age five through school-age and their families to prepare Pennsylvania's children for success in school and in life. It is the combination of programs such as Keystone STARS, Child Care Works, Head Start, Early Intervention, Full-Day Kindergarten, Nurse-Family Partnership, Keystone Babies and Parent-Child Home Program that provides the most effective results. For more information, visit www.education.state.pa.us.

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts at a glance

- In 2009-2010, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts serves 11,800 at-risk children in 62 counties, approximately four percent of preschoolers in the commonwealth.
- Eligible children live in families earning up to 300% of the federal poverty level (\$66,150 for a family of four) and may be affected by other risk factors such as having special needs or learning English as a second language.
- Offered in Keystone STAR 3 & 4 child care centers or group homes, Head Start programs, school districts, and nursery schools.
- Programs provide high quality pre-kindergarten with educated teachers, small class sizes, approved curriculum, and assessment of children's progress throughout the year.

[#]Based on the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment