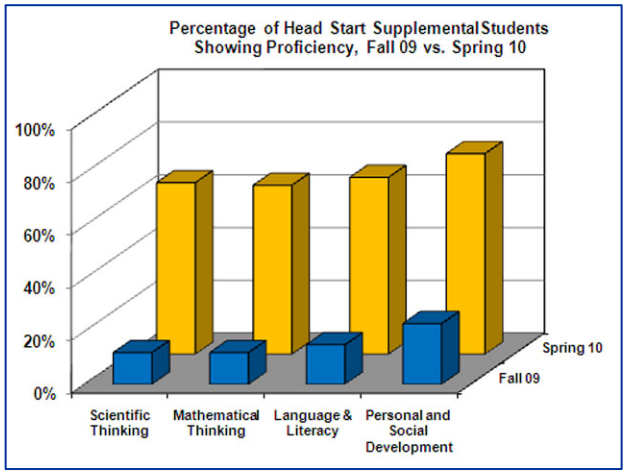
June 2010: Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program: Comprehensive services for our most at-risk children

Pennsylvania's Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program (HSSAP) is based on the federal model of Head Start, providing services to three and four year olds and their families living up to 130% of the federal poverty guidelines. HSSAP provides supplemental funding to existing Head Start programs to expand the number of children and families served or to extend the length of day or program year for children currently receiving services. In 2009-2010, more than 5,500 children are receiving Head Start services through HSSAP funding in 48 programs in 53 counties. More than 33,500 children receive Head Start services through combined federal and state funding in Pennsylvania.

Head Start Supplemental is promoting children's school readiness.

Nearly every child (98 percent) showed age-appropriate or emerging age-appropriate proficiency in literacy, numeracy, and social skills after attending Head Start Supplemental in 2009-2010.

- More than 65 percent of preschoolers who attended Head Start Supplemental 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 12% in Fall to 65% in Spring.
  - The percent of children who were proficient in Mathematical Thinking increased from 12% in Fall to 64% in Spring.
  - The percent of children who were proficient in Language and Literacy increased from 15% in Fall to 67% in Spring.
  - The percent of children who were proficient in Personal and Social Development increased from 23% in Fall to 76% in Spring.



HSSAP is giving our most at-risk children a strong start.

Because eligible children live in families up to 130% of the federal poverty level (i.e., a family of four earning $28,665), they are at high risk of entering kindergarten developmentally behind and of failing in school.

> *"When I registered my daughter for Kindergarten, they went over a list of things that they want children to be doing before they come to Kindergarten and she is able to do all of them. She would not be doing all these things if she was not in Head Start."*
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> - Colby Howard, Parent, York County

HSSAP provides comprehensive services to child and family.

The Head Start model provides comprehensive education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children and their families. Parents are included in their child's learning through collaboration between teachers and families, encouraged to volunteer in the classroom and participate on the Parent Advisory Council.

> *"I love the parent involvement part of the Head Start program—I feel that when the teachers come to visit our home they are very interested in my son and it also makes him feel more secure seeing us talk to his teachers. And we really like all of the parent activities that are held at the school. We are also amazed by how much he is learning at such a young age. This week the class has been studying dinosaurs and he came home and used the word "paleontologist" while talking to my husband—we could not believe it!"*
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> - Moraima Ruiz, Parent, Philadelphia

Providing a quality early education continuum

Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program 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 PA Pre-K Counts, Keystone STARS, Child Care Works, 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.