

March 2009: Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts: Showing Results for Pennsylvania's Children



For A Brighter Future

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts provides high quality pre-kindergarten services to 11,800 3 & 4 year olds in the commonwealth so that they can enter school ready to learn and succeed in school and in life. Children's progress and parent engagement is already resulting in academic achievement for our students and savings in special education costs for our school districts.

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts is preparing our children for kindergarten

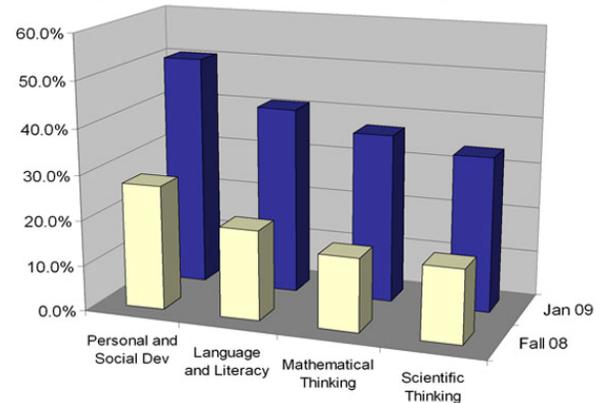
In 2007-2008

- Ninety-four percent of PA Pre-K Counts children finished the school year with age-appropriate skills and behavior or emerging age-appropriate skills and behavior – a stunning success rate.

In 2008-2009

- Twice as many three-year olds in PA Pre-K Counts classrooms demonstrated proficiency in personal social development and scientific thinking at mid-year than at the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year.
- Twice as many four year-olds demonstrated proficiency in language & literacy and mathematical thinking at mid-year than at the beginning of the school year. Nearly 80 percent are showing age-appropriate skill development in these areas.

Percentage of PA Pre-K Counts children proficient in Fall 2008 and January 2009



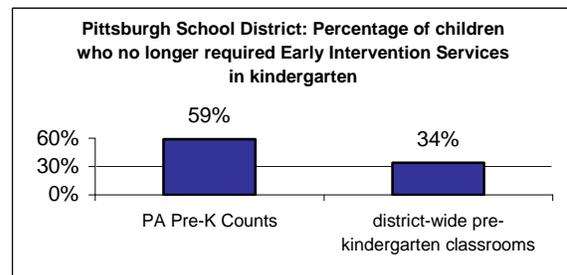
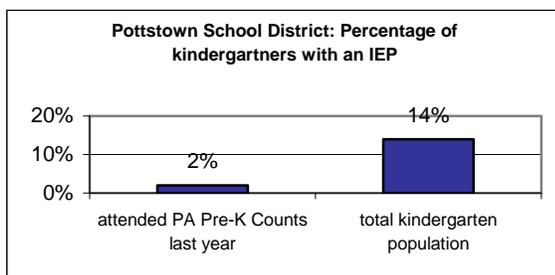
Children from PA Pre-K Counts classrooms in 2007-08 are demonstrating excellent results on kindergarten assessments in 2008-2009. School Districts report that PA Pre-K Counts children entered kindergarten with age-appropriate skills, were more prepared for kindergarten than their peers, and are meeting development expectations throughout kindergarten. For example:

- Nearly every PA Pre-K Counts graduate (95%) entering kindergarten in the Turkeyfoot Valley Area School District showed age-appropriate skills per the DIBELS screening assessment.¹
- Erie and Corry School District's kindergarten teachers reported that 85.7% of the children who participated in PA Pre-K Counts classrooms were doing better in math, literacy and social skills compared to peers who had not attended PA Pre-K Counts; 100% were doing better in motor skills; and 57% were better able to follow rules and be self-regulated.

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts is reducing the need for special education services

Children with developmental delays who participated in PA Pre-K Counts in 2007-2008 were able to make significant developmental progress to enter kindergarten on par with the national norm.

- Many children who entered PA Pre-K Counts in 2007-2008 with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) requiring Early Intervention services no longer required services when they entered kindergarten this year.
- Of those children who participated in PA Pre-K Counts last year, a smaller percentage is requiring Early Intervention services in kindergarten than the total kindergarten population.



¹ The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) are a set of standardized, individually administered measures of early literacy development. The DIBELS assessment is widely used in kindergarten and first grade to regularly monitor the development of students' early literacy skills.

PA Pre-K Counts is getting parents involved in their children's early learning

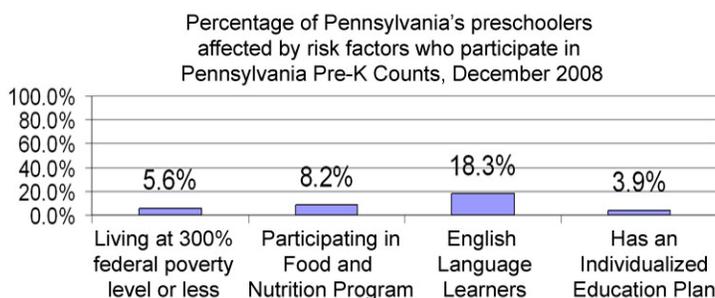
Parents are remarking on the progress in their children's learning and social skills since entering Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts. After seeing their child's progress and receiving encouragement and support from teachers, parents are continuing their child's early learning at home, volunteering in the classrooms and attending parent workshops.

After losing my job earlier this year, I wasn't sure if I would be able to put my daughter in preschool. I heard about Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts from someone at my church and called right away. My daughter's growth has been wonderful. She is excited about meeting new children, and her learning so far has far exceeded my expectations. Thank you for this awesome program. Parent, Child Advocates, Blair County

Less than 5% of Pennsylvania's preschoolers participate in PA Pre-K Counts

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts is still only reaching a fraction of eligible children. In 2008-2009, less than four percent of Pennsylvania's 3 and 4 year olds are participating in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts. Participation rates are slightly higher (approximately six percent) in counties that are at moderate-high to high risk of school failure².

According to grantee reports, nearly 95% of children participating in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts are affected by at least one risk factor for school failure, with 75% affected by more than one risk factor. Often children affected by risk factors, such as living in low income families or English language learners, enter school without all the academic and social skills they need to succeed. This readiness gap can widen into an "achievement gap" as the child goes through school. Although all children benefit from quality pre-kindergarten, research has shown that at-risk children benefit the most, and can often catch up with their peers developmentally by the end of the pre-kindergarten year. Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts is reaching only a fraction of at-risk children who can benefit from high quality pre-kindergarten.



As a kindergarten teacher, I have found that students who have gone through a PA Pre-K Counts program come to school with more advanced skills, experiences and enthusiasm. I believe that PA Pre-K Counts is an excellent way to jump-start a child's knowledge and help prepare a child for kindergarten.

Quality program design and accountability is providing positive results for children

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts meets or exceeds nearly every quality benchmark established by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER). Comprehensive accountability includes a system of reporting, site monitoring and classroom environment ratings. Grantees submit monthly and quarterly reports which are monitored and reviewed by OCDEL staff. Preschool Program Specialists conduct site visits and, using a comprehensive review, evaluate each grantee on how 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 that serves children from birth to age five and their families to give Pennsylvania's children a strong foundation for future 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 and Nurse Family Partnership that provides the most effective results. For more information, visit www.pde.state.pa.us/early_childhood/.

² Risk level refers to what extent children are at risk of school failure in that county, based on OCDEL's Program Reach and County Risk Assessment, FY 2007-2008.