

DRAFT
Executive Summary
Update to the February 2007 Interim Evaluation of the First Year Implementation of
the Child Development Education Program (CDEPP)

This report updates the February 2007 “Interim Evaluation Report on the First Year Implementation of the Child Development Pilot Program (CDEPP)” based on fiscal and student program participation data collected by the State Department of Education (SDE) and the Office of First Steps to School Readiness (OFS) in March and April 2007. The Department of Social Services (DSS) and the State Head Start Collaboration Office also provided updated student data collected in May 2007. The purposes of this update to the interim report are to report progress made in the improvement of program data quality, provide more accurate information from the pilot’s start-up year, identify additional issues revealed by the pilot for consideration should the program be permanently enacted, and to describe planned evaluation activities over the next several months in preparation for the January 2008 report to the General Assembly on the pilot program.

Fiscal Year 2006-2007 Appropriations, Allocations, and Expenditures

The following information is based upon financial data provided to the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) by the SDE and by OFS. The data do not reflect the final, official expenditures which will be verified with the Comptroller General’s Office when the state’s Fiscal Year 2006-07 budget is complete. In summary, Table 5 (below) from the full report highlights the financial expenditures and provision of services for CDEPP in 2006-07 based on the most recent data.

Table 5
CDEPP
Based on Financial Data ALONE

	Department of Education	Office of First Steps
2006-07 Supplemental Appropriations	\$15,717,104.00	\$ 7,858,576.00
Children Funded	2,932	309
New Classrooms Funded	164	39
Average No. CDEPP Children per Funded Classroom	17.9	7.9
Program Expenditures:		
Instructional	\$9,021,764.00	\$ 817,007.00
Transportation	\$ 245,865.00	\$ 14,269.00
Supplies & Materials	\$1,607,999.44	\$ 372,600.00
Training	\$160,574.65	¹
TOTAL:	\$11,036,203.09	\$1,203,876.00
Administration		
State	\$96,307.53	\$ 288,363.00
County Partnerships		\$28,967.00
Grants to SCAEYC and SCECA	\$58,485.75	
Estimated Balance:	\$4,526,107.63	\$6,134,406.00

¹ Training is not a separate line item. Training provided to teachers in private settings is part of the agency’s administrative costs included in contractual services and travel.

Conclusions:

- Based upon financial data provided to the EOC by the Department of Education on July 19, 2007 and by the Office of First Steps to School Readiness on June 30, 2007, the state paid for 3,241 children to participate in CDEPP – 2,932 in public schools and 309 in private settings.
- Of the \$23,575,680 that was allocated for the first year of the CDEPP pilot program, approximately \$12,915,166.37 or 55% was expended leaving a carry forward of approximately \$10,660,513.63. The budget surplus is due to at least three factors: (1) non-participation in CDEPP by eight eligible school districts; (2) normal lag time in implementing a new program and in approving eligible private providers; and (3) difficulty in finding and enrolling eligible children in both public and private programs.
- During the first year of the pilot program the financial systems established to reimburse public and private providers were significantly different. The Department of Education used a cumulative enrollment count that did not take into account the child's attendance or membership. On the other hand, private providers were reimbursed based on actual invoices received using a pro-rated student attendance count. The Department of Education will incorporate a daily rate in the second year of the pilot program.
- And, unlike the Department of Education which reimbursed public schools directly through allocations to school districts, private providers received reimbursements directly from the county First Steps partnerships that, in turn, had been allocated funds from the state Office of First Steps. The Office of First Steps did monitor the reimbursement system and collect information on all invoices processed.

Analysis of Student, Teacher, and Provider Data

The public school student and teacher data used for this update are based on the data collections by the SDE at approximately three-fourths of the way through the 180-day school year (known as the "135th-day data collection," it takes place in late March or early April). The private CDEPP provider data were provided by the OFS and are based on data through April 2007. Data from four year old students served 30 hours or more per week in an ABC Voucher child care program were provided by the Department of Social Services (DSS), and data from four year old students enrolled in Head Start programs were provided by the State Head Start Collaboration Office. The DSS and Head Start data are based on May 2007 enrollments. In general, the completeness and accuracy of the 135th-day data regarding CDEPP is quite encouraging compared to the data available for the February interim report.

Twenty-nine of the 37 plaintiff districts participated in CDEPP in 2006-2007 and 8 did not. All 8 of the trial districts participated in CDEPP. Among the 29 participating districts, six elected to institute CDEPP in some, but not all, of their schools housing four-year-old child development programs. (See Table 7 in the full report.)

Eligible four-year-olds residing in the plaintiff districts could attend a CDEPP program provided either by eligible private providers or by the local public school system. There were 36 private providers serving at least one CDEPP-eligible student (listed in Table 8

in report). Thirty-four of these private providers were located in plaintiff school districts and 2 were located in non-plaintiff districts. Eligible students could attend a CDEPP program in a private provider located in a non-plaintiff district, but the student was required to live in a plaintiff district.

Numbers of students served

Data listed in Appendix D Tables 1-3 in the report are summarized and comparative information from the 2005-2006 school year are provided in Table 9 (below) in the report.

Table 9
Summary of Numbers of Students Participating in State-Funded Four-Year-Old
Pre-Kindergarten Programs, 2005-06 and 2006-07 School Years
135th-day Data Collection (March-April 2007)

PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GROUP	ALL 85 DISTRICTS		37 PLAINTIFF DISTRICTS		29 DISTRICTS PARTICIPATING IN CDEPP**	
	2006-07	2005-06	2006-07	2005-06	2006-07	2005-06
Four-year-old Population Estimate	57,251	56,114	11,642	11,746	9,615	9,731
Children in Poverty* Estimate	36,794	35,010	9,116	9,092	7,515	7,524
Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Estimate	30,495	29,737	7,926	8,016	6,546	6,639
Public School 4K Total Served	20,569	21,145	5,072	5,095	4,311	4,265
Public Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Served Total	13,362	12,871	3,758	3,476	3,254	2,934
Public School Pay Lunch Served	7,199	8,142	1,281	1,564	1,051	1,301
Public School Lunch Status Missing	8	132	6	55	6	30
Public School CDEPP** Served (Student Data File)	2,717	N/A	2,717	N/A	2,717	N/A
Public School CDEPP** Served (Finance Data File)	2,932	N/A	2,932	N/A	2,932	N/A
First Steps CDEPP** Students Served (2006-07 only)	303	N/A	302	N/A	236	N/A
First Steps Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Served (2005-06 only)	N/A	123	N/A	0	N/A	0
Full-Day ABC Voucher Served Estimated	3,471	2,495	738	446	631	391
Head Start Served Estimated	5,806	6,057	1,972	2,008	1,434	1,516
Public School Free/Reduced, 1 st Steps, ABC, Head Start Total	23,559	21,546	6,881	5,930	5,630	4,841
Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Students NOT Served	6,936	8,191	1,045	2,086	916	1,798

* Children in Poverty include children eligible for the Federal free- or reduced-price lunch program and/or Medicaid services; these students meet the eligibility requirements for participation in the CDEPP program.

**CDEPP = Child Development Education Pilot Program

N/A= Not Applicable.

Data Sources: Student data files and Finance files, S.C. Department of Education; Census population estimates (2006), Office of Research & Statistics, S.C. Budget and Control Board; Birth population estimates (2005), S.C. Department of Health & Environmental Control; S.C. Office of First Steps to School Readiness; S.C. Department of Social Services (ABC Voucher data); and the S.C. Head Start Collaboration Office

How many four-year-olds participated in CDEPP in April 2007?

The number of eligible four-year-olds participating in CDEPP at the time of the 135th-day data collection in the 29 participating school districts was 2,717. The number of four-

year-olds participating in First Steps private provider CDEPP programs was 303 (based on student enrollment data provided on May 2, 2007). There were a total of 3,020 students (2,717 in public schools, 303 in private centers) enrolled in CDEPP at the time of the 135th-day data collection. Based on the finance data, a cumulative total of 3,241 students (2,932 in public schools, 309 in private centers) participated at some time during the 2006-2007 school year by the 135th day of instruction.

Were more eligible students served with publicly-funded public and private full-day pre-kindergarten programs in the 37 plaintiff districts and in the 29 plaintiff districts participating in CDEPP in 2006-07 than in 2005-06?

Yes, more students living in the plaintiff districts eligible for the Federal lunch program were served in a publicly-funded pre-kindergarten program in 2006-07: 951 (from 5,930 in 2005-2006 to 6,881 in 2006-2007) more students were served in the 37 plaintiff districts, and 789 (from 4,841 to 5,630) more students were served in the 29 plaintiff districts participating in CDEPP. The state-level data also showed an increase of 2,013 total students eligible for the free- or reduced-price lunch program served statewide in a publicly-funded pre-kindergarten program (from 21,546 in 2005-06 to 23,559 in 2006-07).

What are the demographic characteristics of CDEPP-participating students?

Almost two-thirds (66.2%) of public school CDEPP students are African American, compared to almost 90% of students receiving CDEPP services from private providers. More than one-third of public school CDEPP students are White, compared to only 5% of CDEPP students in private centers. The percentage of Hispanic students enrolled in CDEPP provided in public schools is also higher than the percentage of CDEPP students in private centers.

In 2006-2007, 3.5% of the four year old students attending CDEPP in public schools were eligible for LEP services (none of the CDEPP students in programs provided by private providers were indicated as eligible for LEP services), but the data provided do not indicate how many actually were provided such services.

Accurate and comprehensive information on CDEPP students' disabilities and the disability-related educational services they received was not available from the public school data for this update. Four of the CDEPP students participating in CDEPP provided by private providers were indicated as having Individualized Education Plans (IEP) related to their disabilities. It seems that CDEPP would have an important role in the identification and provision of educational services to young children having disabilities to help in the prevention of future academic problems for these students. This issue and the numbers of four year old children having disabilities and the services provided for them will be studied further for reporting in the January 1, 2008 report to the General Assembly.

What is the average class size of CDEPP classrooms?

At the time of the 135th-day data collection the average public school CDEPP classroom contained 17.9 students, ranging from 6 to 21 students. The average number of CDEPP-eligible students in these classrooms was 15.8, with a range of 2 to 20 students. The average number of students in these classrooms who were not eligible for CDEPP was 2.1, with a range from 0 ineligible students to 10. These data indicate that there is a

moderate level of economic diversity among students enrolled in public school classrooms containing CDEPP-eligible students. There is some evidence from the evaluations of the Georgia preschool programs and from other studies that heterogeneous classroom settings provide educational benefits to academically at-risk students. The average private center enrolled 8.4 CDEPP students, with a range from a minimum of 1 student to a maximum of 20 students per center (classroom data were not available).

Issues Identified in the Update to the February 2007 Interim Evaluation Report

The February 2007 interim CDEPP evaluation report raised several issues revealed by the data collected from the early start-up activities for the first year of the pilot. Those issues included:

- Concerns about the poor quality of program and student data;
- Need for marketing the program to parents and providers to expand participation in the program, revealed by the projected funding surplus for the program;
- Per-child and transportation reimbursement levels in the first year of the pilot may have been insufficient to make the program sufficiently attractive to some potential providers;
- The program's high teacher requirements and the facilities requirements were identified by some program administrators as barriers to expansion;
- More information from a second year of the pilot was needed to better inform future legislation.

This update to the interim evaluation report confirms the need to focus on those issues and adds some additional issues for consideration:

1. The funding surplus from the first year of the CDEPP pilot emphasizes the need for increased marketing of the CDEP program to parents and potential program providers. Of the \$23,575,680 that was allocated for the first year of the CDEPP pilot program, approximately \$12,915,166.37 or 55% was expended leaving a carry forward of approximately \$10,660,513.63. The budget surplus is due to at least three factors: (1) non-participation in CDEPP by eight eligible school districts; (2) normal lag time in implementing a new program and in approving eligible private providers; and (3) difficulty in finding and enrolling eligible children in both public and private programs. Information on the numbers of providers anticipated in 2007-2008 and projections of the numbers of students to be served are anticipated by the SDE and OFS by late July 2007; this information was not available at the time this report was drafted.
2. The quality and completeness of the 2006-2007 program data improved substantially by the time of the April 2007 data collection. The improvement in quality of the data can be attributed to the efforts on the part of state agency and local provider personnel during the year, and demonstrates that accurate and comprehensive data for early childhood programs can be collected. Some data quality and availability issues remain, however, and the issue needs continued attention. For example, not all students have been assigned the necessary unique student identifier needed for program evaluation and record-keeping. DIAL3 screening assessments were conducted by school and provider

personnel, but problems with the collection of those results by the state agencies for evaluation purposes need to be solved. Information on students with disabilities and on Limited English Proficient (LEP) students is currently either not available or incomplete.

3. While the data are incomplete, it is clear that some of the students enrolled in CDEPP also have disabilities and/or are not native speakers of English (LEP students). Students with disabilities may also be eligible for CDEPP if their families meet the income or Medicaid requirements. The level of participation in CDEPP of students having disabilities is not clear from the available data nor is information on the kinds of educational services CDEPP participants with disabilities are receiving. The role of full-day pre-kindergarten programs in the education of preschool children with disabilities should be examined in the planning of future state-funded preschool programs.

In 2006-2007, 3.5% of the four year old students attending CDEPP in public schools were eligible for LEP services, but the data provided do not indicate how many actually were provided such services. Demographic projections indicate that the numbers of children in South Carolina who have a language other than English as their primary language will increase substantially over the next several years. The need for educational programs to help these students acquire English language skills sufficient to meet the academic challenges of the State's standards-based educational system should be a consideration in the future implementation of state-funded preschool programs.

More in-depth review of the issues of providing language and special educational services to CDEPP students will be conducted for the January 1, 2008 evaluation report to the General Assembly.