



from the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee
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Results of CDEPP student assessments show progress

Editor's Note: Copies of the "*Results of Student and Classroom Assessments in School Year 2009-10 for the Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP)*," can be found online at www.eoc.sc.gov. The report was presented to the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) at a full committee meeting on October 11, 2010.

Columbia – The South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (EOC) has released a report presenting the results of assessments of students in the Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP), a pilot full-day educational pre-kindergarten program for at-risk four-year-olds residing in 37 SC school districts.

According to Dr. Bill Brown, who leads the interdisciplinary evaluation team of University of South Carolina researchers who assessed the students, the results of the studies show "that children in CDEPP made modest and meaningful progress in language, achievement, and social and behavior development." Furthermore, Brown noted that the student gains were maintained as children moved from pre-kindergarten to kindergarten.

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

This report also presents results of classroom assessments conducted in CDEPP classrooms in school year 2009-2010. Results of the evaluations are evidence that instructional quality could be improved with targeted professional development.

Brown specifically noted that enhanced professional development should be considered to enhance teachers' instructional support with improvements in teacher teaching interactions that target conceptual development, teacher feedback for student learning, and additional encouragements for children to use language.

Three recommendations are included in the report:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.

The CDEPP is currently in its fourth year of implementation in both public and private child care centers. The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) is responsible for implementation of CDEPP in public schools; the Office of First Steps to School Readiness (OFS) implements the program among private providers. The 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*.

The SC Education Oversight Committee is an independent, non-partisan group made up of 18 educators, business persons, and elected leaders. Created in 1998, the committee is dedicated to reporting facts, measuring change, and promoting progress within South Carolina's education system.

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