



At a Glance

2009-10 Evaluation Report

Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP)

February 2010

The interdisciplinary evaluation team composed of evaluators from the University of South Carolina and staff from the EOC has issued an annual report on CDEPP since the program's implementation in Fiscal Year 2006-07. This is the third annual report issued by the team pursuant to Proviso 1.62. of the 2009-10 General Appropriations Act.

What makes this evaluation unique is its inclusion of individual student assessments. Annually, children from a representative sample of CDEPP students are individually assessed in the fall when entering CDEPP and again at the end of the preschool year. These same children are individually assessed again at the beginning of kindergarten. The evaluation model intends to assess and track these children until third grade when the state assessment test (PASS) will be used to measure student academic progress. Children in both public and private centers are assessed. The longitudinal data will provide policymakers and educators with concrete evidence of the impact of CDEPP on school readiness and academic achievement. **To date, individual preschool assessments of children served in CDEPP show modest yet meaningful gains; the program is addressing school readiness for students at-risk for school failure.**

What did the current evaluation reveal?

The number of children served has increased slightly and stabilized.

2008-09 School Year

Providers	Number of Children Served (% Increase over Prior Year)
42 Private Centers	459 children (9.5%)
35 School Districts	3,859 children (1.2%)

- Barnwell 45 and Saluda are CDEPP-eligible school districts. However, Barnwell 45 has not participated in the program, and Saluda only began participating in the current school year.
- Number of private centers participating and enrolling CDEPP students decreased from 46 to 42; however, average class sizes increased from 9.3 to 11.8. Number of private providers serving five or fewer students also declined from 15 in 2007-08 to 6 in 2008-09.

CDEPP has successfully attracted parents and providers into the program.

78.0% of 4-year-olds at-risk for school failure due to poverty are being served with a publicly-funded pre-kindergarten program in school districts implementing CDEPP. In the remaining 48 districts, only 57.2% of the 4-year-olds at-risk due to poverty are being served with a publicly-funded program.

Funding – General Assembly funded CDEPP with recurring general funds in FY10

- Total program expenditures for CDEPP were \$19.9 million in FY2008-09.

Future demands – Number of four-year-olds to increase

- By school year 2011-12 the number of four-year-olds in South Carolina is projected to increase by 6.7% to 64,637 and number of four-year-olds in poverty by 4.9% to 42,139.

In addition to ongoing evaluation activities, the team conducted:

- Interviews with CDEPP personnel in Florence and Berkeley Counties, where the program significantly expanded from the first to second year of the program's implementation, that revealed common leadership elements in these providers:
 - commitment by the organization and leadership to implement and expand CDEPP regardless of obstacles;
 - designation of at least one staff person for implementation and expansion of CDEPP;
 - intentionality in expansion including the recruitment of children, the securing of funds, and the preparation of classrooms; and
 - collaboration among public schools, child care providers, Head Start and other community entities whenever possible.
- On-line survey of CDEPP coordinators in public school districts to determine what, if any, local administrative costs related to CDEPP are incurred by school districts. The results showed:
 - sufficient funding for supplies, materials, transportation and professional development;
 - administration of program delegated among several district and school staff;
 - recruitment of children and families is generally a school function;
 - maintaining DSS licensure is greatest challenge; however, the issues of ongoing professional development, background checks and medical check-ups likely impact rural school districts due to limited transportation. The challenge seems to involve administrative oversight rather than significant financial costs;
 - cost of playground equipment cited as the greatest initial cost of implementing CDEPP and not covered by the \$10,000 state allocation; and
 - 26% of districts reported "no" collaboration with early childhood programs (private, Head Start, etc.).
- Comparison of professional development and technical assistance provided by SCDE and OFS with national models revealed:
 - SCDE and OFS implement separate programs supporting their respective CDEPP personnel;
 - most information on professional development and technical assistance limited to process measures like number of hours of training, number of site visits, etc.; and
 - no data to evaluate the impact of these efforts on CDEPP workforce.

What are the report's recommendations?

1. Continue funding of the program;
2. Prepare for future expansion by utilizing experiences and expertise of individuals who lead efforts to expand CDEPP in public and private centers;
3. Require greater collaboration at state level to administer the program;
4. Encourage greater collaboration at the local level to address transportation issues and professional development needs of CDEPP personnel;
5. Engage higher education by establishing a Center of Excellence for Professional Development to Enhance the Recruitment and Retention of Preschool Teachers in South Carolina's State Funded Pre-kindergarten Programs for Children at Risk for School Failure; and
6. Consolidate all funds for early childhood education in the Education Improvement Act budget and streamline funding by eliminating the \$2,500 per class allocation for supplies and materials and by increasing the per child reimbursement rate by \$125 for the cost of supplies and materials.