



Report on the Implementation and Expansion of the Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP) – January 2009

Executive Briefing

An evaluation conducted by the staff of the SC Education Oversight Committee and personnel with the University of South Carolina



Background

The Child Development Education Pilot Program (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*. CDEPP was established in response to the ruling by Judge Thomas Cooper which directed the State to provide more resources to the plaintiff districts to meet the educational needs of young children in poverty. Children residing in the plaintiff districts who attain the age of four years by September 1 and whose families meet the income requirements (federal free- or reduced-price lunch program and/ or Medicaid) are eligible for the program.

The program is currently in its third year of implementation in both public and private centers, serving eligible children residing in the original school districts. The public school program is administered by South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE), and the private program is administered by the Office of First Steps to School Readiness (OFS).

Since 2006-07, CDEPP has been established and funded through annual provisos in the General Appropriations Act. During the 117th SC General Assembly, which met in 2007 and 2008, the House and the Senate debated and passed separate legislation to establish a full day 4-year-old program. However, the General Assembly adjourned in June 2008 without having agreed upon and enacted permanent legislation.

The annual provisos require the EOC to conduct annual evaluations of the program. The annual evaluations are important for demonstrating trends, improvements, and challenges with the implementation and expansion of the program. Earlier reports have been published in February 2007, July 2007, and January 2008. This report focuses on program implementation across the first and second years of the pilot program.

CDEPP's Impact Over the Two Pilot Years

✓ More students served

Total number of children served increased by 29 percent.

More than three-fourths (77.5 percent) of 4-year-olds at-risk for school failure due to poverty are being served with a publicly-funded pre-kindergarten program in CDEPP districts as compared to 52.5 percent of four-year-olds at-risk for school failure due to poverty being served in non-CDEPP districts.

	2006-07	2007-08
Public centers	2,763	3,815
Private centers	303	420
TOTAL	3,066	4,335

Data based on 135th day enrollment

✓ More providers participating; more CDEPP classrooms

Significant gains made in Berkeley, Florence 1, Florence 3, and Laurens 56 school districts and in private centers in Florence County.

	2006-07	2007-08
Districts	29	35
Schools	70	96
Classrooms	164	241
Private Centers	36	46

Data based on 135th day enrollment



✓ **Positive parent perceptions**
Spring 2008 survey of parents showed parents of children in the program are overwhelmingly positive about the program.

✓ **Demonstrated initial academic gains**
Initial findings show children meeting CDEPP criteria (family income and Medicaid status) have significant developmental needs upon entering the program.

Follow-up assessments show children in CDEPP made modest and meaningful progress in school readiness skills.

Future Projections

✓ **Statewide, number of 4-year-olds to increase by 5.6 percent or 3,324 by school year 2010-11.**
Number of 4-year-olds in poverty (qualified for CDEPP) to increase by 9.1 percent.

✓ **Facilities survey shows space availability highest in the private sector.**

Financial Analysis

CDEPP, 2007-08

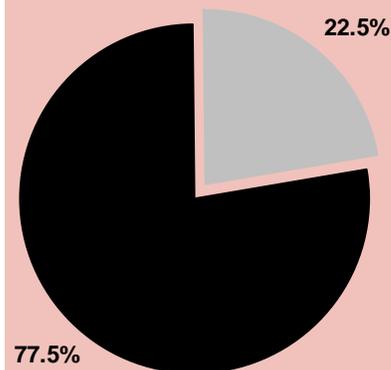
	SCDE	OFS
Appropriations and Carry Forward Monies	\$17,165,921	\$9,787,811
Services to Children	\$16,462,467	\$1,902,934
Administration	\$526,370	\$501,659
Carry Forward to Program, 2008-09	\$177,084	\$7,155,220
Balance at County Partnerships		\$227,998

✓ **Per child expenditures for instruction, supplies and materials, and transportation reveal significant variations between public and private centers due to class size differences.**

✓ **Per child administrative costs vary significantly between \$1,040 per child at OFS to \$160 per child at SCDE.**

SERVED OR NOT SERVED?

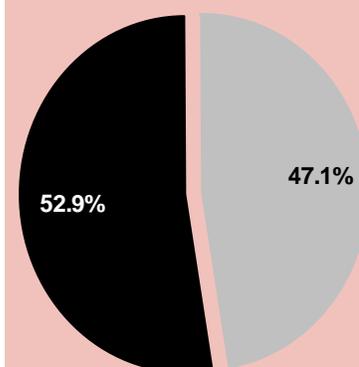
Children in Poverty in 37 Plaintiff Districts



■ children in poverty NOT served by publicly-funded pre-Kindergarten Program, n=2,048, 22.5% of four-year-olds in poverty

■ children in poverty served by publicly-funded pre-Kindergarten Program, n=7,052, 77.5% of four-year-olds in poverty

Children in Poverty in 48 non-Plaintiff Districts



■ children in poverty NOT served by publicly-funded pre-Kindergarten Program, n=13,920, 47.1% of four-year-olds in poverty

■ children in poverty served by publicly-funded pre-Kindergarten Program, n=15,609, 52.9% of four-year-olds in poverty



Continued Research

Educational Impact

- To gauge development, students who attend state-funded preschool programs in the state are assessed with the Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning, Third Education (*DIAL-3*). Annually the EOC evaluates the *DIAL-3* scores. Analyzing *DIAL-3* scores for the past two years has shown that CDEPP students are at higher level of risk than non-CDEPP students. However, there are non-CDEPP eligible students who score at or below the 25th percentile on two or more of the *DIAL* subscales and would benefit from CDEPP services.
- An independent evaluation team from USC is working with the EOC to track the educational progress of students who participated in CDEPP across years. Each year an additional 150 preschoolers served in CDEPP will be evaluated during the spring and fall of their kindergarten year. The results will reveal the long-term educational impact of CDEPP on student academic achievement.

Early Withdrawal

- As many as 1 of 9 CDEPP participants enroll in the program 10 or more days after the program starts and 1 of 12 withdrawn from the program before the 135th day of the school year. The 2010 evaluation will determine factors that influence the continuity of CDEPP student enrollment across the year.

Areas for Improvement

- CDEPP continues to be funded with non-recurring revenues.
- Sixty-four percent of parents whose child was in CDEPP did not know they had a choice between private and public providers.
- There is a documented need to maximize professional development opportunities and minimize costs through greater collaboration between public and private sectors, SCDE, OFS, and higher education.



CDEPP Teachers

Public school CDEPP teachers have higher educational degrees held, early childhood certification, years teaching experience, and compensation for their professional efforts.

CDEPP Parents

The most popular reasons for participating in CDEPP were related to trust, such as parent comfort with the CDEPP personnel and parents' perception that their child would be kept safe.



Recommendations

SC General Assembly

- The General Assembly either should consolidate administration of CDEPP into one entity providing services in the public and private sectors or establish a shared services model for the administration of CDEPP in the public and private sectors to reduce administrative costs, to coordinate technical assistance, to provide a means by which eligible students can be referred to participant providers and to ensure that the maximum benefit to students is achieved with the dollars available.
- The General Assembly should expand CDEPP statewide to serve all 4-year-olds at-risk due to poverty serving children in school districts according to the level of poverty and providing that, when at least 75% of the total number of eligible CDEPP children in the district/county are served, providers should receive reimbursement in CDEPP to serve pay-lunch children who score at or below the 25th national percentile on two of the three *DIAL-3* subscales (*Language, Concepts, and Motor Skills Scales*).
- The General Assembly should fund expansion of the program accompanied by the reallocation of EIA half-day child development funding into CDEPP.
- The General Assembly should establish and SCDE and OFS should enforce minimum class size requirements of at least 6 students and minimum provider participation commitments of at least three years.
- The General Assembly should maintain the current CDEPP teacher qualifications.
- The General Assembly should require that the EOC provide a facilities study for CDEPP on a triennial rather than annual basis.

Education Oversight Committee

- The EOC should expand the CDEPP evaluation to include the following:
 - A financial audit of CDEPP as administered by OFS and SCDE to reveal areas of cost-savings and to establish a reasonable administrative cost structure;
 - A determination of the factors including policy issues, leadership characteristics and community concerns that led to substantial increases in the number of CDEPP participants served in specific districts and counties;
 - A determination of how many private center teachers are pursuing a four-year degree and the barriers incurred in obtaining the higher educational attainment;
 - A determination of the factors that influence the continuity of CDEPP student enrollment across the full 180-day program and policy or programmatic changes needed to assure that CDEPP participants fully benefit from the program; and
 - A review of any formalized plan or evaluation data to assess the quality and impact of professional development and training provided by OFS and SCDE to CDEPP teachers.

Other

- The **SCDE** and **OFS** should institute incentives and penalties to facilitate the improvement of CDEPP data quality and completeness.
- The **Commission on Higher Education** should fund a Center of Excellence for preschool technical assistance and professional development. The Center would work with SCDE, OFS, school districts, private CDEPP providers and the South Carolina Technical College System to establish and sustain a responsive regionalized professional development and technical assistance system.



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A complete copy of the January 2009 “Report on the Implementation and Expansion of the Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP)” can currently be found online at www.eoc.sc.gov.

A summary report on the pilot program, working documents, and previous reports can be found online at <http://www.eoc.sc.gov/evaluationsinprogress/fouryearoldkindergarten.htm>.

For additional information, contact the EOC at (803) 734-6148.