

June 2011: Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts promotes children's school readiness and school success

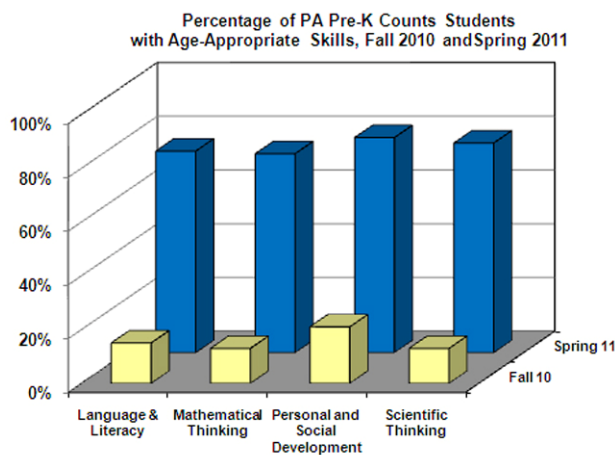


Nearly every child (99%) showed age-appropriate or emerging age-appropriate language, math, and social skills after attending Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts in 2010-2011.*

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts provides high quality pre-kindergarten services to 11,500 at-risk three & four year olds in the commonwealth so that they can enter school ready to learn and succeed in school and in life. Fourth year outcomes continue to show that Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts children are:

- Making outstanding progress throughout their participation in the program;
- Entering kindergarten with appropriate academic and social skills and ready to learn; and
- Continuing to achieve in school through second grade.

Less than one in four children began the school year in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts classrooms with age-appropriate skills. **By the end of the school year, approximately three in four children showed age-appropriate language, math and social skills after attending Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts in 2010-2011.**



- The percent of children who were proficient in **Language and Literacy** increased from 15% in Fall to 75% in Spring.
- The percent of children who were proficient in **Mathematical Thinking** increased from 13% in Fall to 74% in Spring.
- The percent of children who were proficient in **Personal and Social Development** increased from 21% in Fall to 80% in Spring.
- The percent of children who were proficient in **Scientific Thinking** increased from 13% in Fall to 74% in Spring.

The first time I walked into [my daughter's] PA Pre-K Counts class I was very impressed. They had a better setup with cognitive toys and computers than some of the higher end preschools that I viewed. After starting to attend school my daughter, who had a speech delay, started speaking slightly clearer. I always thought she would have more of a withdrawn personality (due to her speech), but she turned into a social butterfly. Her writing looks beautiful, her attitude is great, and she is better able to deal with situations with her peers. I could not ask for more than what PA Pre-K Counts has provided for my daughter and my family. I look forward to enrolling my son when he turns four.

Hiroko F., parent, Lehigh Valley Child Care, Lehigh County

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts receives high marks from parents.

In a 2010 survey of nearly 3,200 parents whose children are participating in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, at least 95% reported that

- The teachers and educational program met their expectations;
- The program offered ways to get involved, such as volunteering; and
- Information on their child's progress motivated them to change how they teach their child at home.

Parent demand for Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts is also high. Approximately 4,500 eligible children were on waiting lists for Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts at the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year.

* Based on PA PKC grantee reports for 10,317 children using an authentic assessment tool and reporting into the Early Learning Network .

Communities are seeing the benefits of Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts.

With Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts grantees serving children in 81% of Pennsylvania's school districts, communities throughout the commonwealth are benefitting from the program through reductions in special education and retention rates, greater kindergarten readiness and school performance.

- Kindergarten teachers report that children who attended Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts make a smoother transition to kindergarten and have the necessary language, math and social skills.
 - In the Altoona Area School District, 85% of PA Pre-K Counts children entered kindergarten at grade level in 2010-2011, while 58% of all children entering kindergarten across the school district were at grade level.
- Grantees also report that children who participated in PA Pre-K Counts since 2008 continue to perform on par with or better than their peers through second grade.
 - According to Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS), over the past five years, only 1% of the students who participated in the PPS early childhood program, which includes Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, were held back in kindergarten, as compared to the district-wide retention rate of between 3%-7%.

Over the past few years, several PA Pre-K Counts students have come to my kindergarten class. [PA Pre-K Counts] students tend to exhibit smoother transitions into kindergarten, in part due to familiarity with classroom structure, routine and above all, having high standards for learning. Academically, these students are well "ahead of the game." Their overall exposure within your program to academics, particularly those involving early literacy, sets a positive tone for the kindergarten year ahead of them. I commend you for a job well done!

Susan Goss. Kindergarten Teacher, Southside Elementary School, Huntingdon County

Children are achieving because of quality standards and strong accountability.

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts programs must meet high standards for enrollment of eligible children, teacher education, curriculum, small class size, and child observation and assessment. The Office of Child Development (OCDEL) monitors compliance with program requirements through a system of reporting, site monitoring and classroom environment ratings. Preschool Program Specialists conduct site visits and evaluate each grantee on how well it has met program requirements. Independent assessors 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.

Pennsylvania is providing families with a variety of quality early education choices.

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts is part of a quality early education system serving children from birth to age five through school-age and their families to prepare Pennsylvania's children for 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, Nurse-Family Partnership, Keystone Babies and Parent-Child Home Program that provides the most effective results. For more information, visit www.education.state.pa.us.

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts at a glance

- In 2010-2011, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts serves 11,500 at-risk children in 62 counties, approximately 4% of preschoolers in the commonwealth.
- Eligible children live in families earning up to 300% of the federal poverty level (\$67,050 for a family of four) and may be affected by other risk factors such as having special needs or learning English as a second language.
- Offered in Keystone STAR 3 & 4 child care centers or group homes, Head Start programs, school districts, and licensed nursery schools.
- Programs provide high quality pre-kindergarten with early childhood-educated teachers, small class sizes, approved curriculum, and assessment of children's progress throughout the year.