

PRE-KINDERGARTEN IN COLORADO



Quality pre-kindergarten (pre-K) increases school readiness. When paired with a quality K-12 experience, it also leads to significant gains in academic achievement, college completion, and employment.

A STRONG START FOR COLORADO

Pre-K is the year of school prior to kindergarten. Publicly-funded pre-K programs can either be **targeted** or **universal**, depending on funding availability and policy goals.

TARGETED

Serves children who are at the highest risk for starting kindergarten behind

The **Colorado Preschool Program (CPP)** serves three- to five-year-olds who have risk factors such as low-income, high mobility, homelessness, or teen parents.



**MORE LIKELY
TO GRADUATE
HIGH SCHOOL
ON TIME**

75% LESS LIKELY
**TO BE RETAINED
IN FIRST GRADE**

7% LESS LIKELY
**TO HAVE SIGNIFICANT READING
DEFICIENCY IN KINDERGARTEN**

UNIVERSAL

Serves all children in the year before they enter kindergarten

The **Denver Preschool Program (DPP)** is a universal and voluntary local program, offering a tuition credit to all four-year-olds in the city on a sliding scale.

**FEWER
LOW-INCOME
STUDENTS PLACED
ON A LITERACY
IMPROVEMENT PLAN**



82.4% MEETING OR EXCEEDING
**EXPECTATIONS IN
VOCABULARY**

83-92%
**OF DPP CHILDREN WERE READY
FOR KINDERGARTEN**



EARLY MILESTONES COLORADO is an independent organization helping to advance innovative solutions that improve policies and practices in early childhood development. We work with state and local partners to exchange ideas, share resources, and create lasting, positive change for children.

STANDARDS FOR SUCCESS

SKILLED TEACHERS. Effective pre-K teachers have special knowledge in early childhood development and the skills to support how young children learn.

SIZE-WISE CLASSES. Nationally recognized standards call for small class sizes of 20 students or fewer with a staff-to-student ratio of 1:10 or better. This allows for more quality interactions.

AGE-APPROPRIATE LEARNING. Young children do best in classrooms that provide a combination of play, exploration, and teacher-directed activities as part of curricula that focus on all areas of development, including physical and social-emotional.

CRITICAL CONNECTIONS. Children best learn and grow when all adults are operating from a unified approach. When teachers and families collaborate, and later grades align with child care settings, pre-K gains can be maximized.

CLOSING ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

A Center for American Progress study estimates that high-quality universal pre-K would have a significant impact on improving achievement gaps for kindergarten entry.

45%

reduced gap in math for African American children

78%

reduced gap in math for Hispanic children

27%

reduced gap in math for low-income children

41%

reduced gap in reading for low-income children

IMPLEMENTATION NEEDS



ACCESS SHOULD BE EQUITABLE FOR ALL.

Thoughtful design of high-quality pre-K programs can ensure that children have equitable opportunities to enter kindergarten ready to learn. Programs can accomplish this by:

- supporting children with special needs, diverse languages, and cultures;
- creating availability across neighborhoods and settings that are easily accessible to families; and
- coordinating with other services families use, such as child care.



PARENT CHOICE MEANS MIXED-DELIVERY.

Pre-K is delivered both in school and community settings that meet Colorado state standards. Parents need to be able to choose the licensed, quality program that works best for their family, whether that is in a neighbor's home, a local center, or a public school.



INFANT-TODDLER CARE IS ESSENTIAL.

Many communities already struggle to serve young children due to a lack of licensed early care and education settings and a lack of teachers. Expansion of public pre-K programs must be carefully designed so that it doesn't cut into services for infants and toddlers, where there are already large program gaps.



QUALITY GETS RESULTS.

Investment in high-quality pre-K programs can reduce the opportunity gap and lead to long-term gains in the classroom and in life.



Learn more:
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