



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Media Contact: Dan Schaller, DPP
720.287.5055 x17 (office)
303.916.4352 (cell)

August 8, 2013

First Longitudinal Analysis Confirms Value of Denver's Preschool Investment: Reading Gains Persist through 3rd Grade

DENVER – Third-graders who participated in the Denver Preschool Program (DPP) four years earlier outperformed their non-DPP peers in Denver Public Schools (DPS) on the 2013 reading TCAP, the Transitional Colorado Assessment Program, the first long-term study of DPP students reveals. These gains occurred despite a demographic profile that puts DPP children at a slightly greater risk of academic failure than their non-DPP counterparts.

Children who can't read by the end of third grade are four to six times more likely to drop out of school.ⁱ

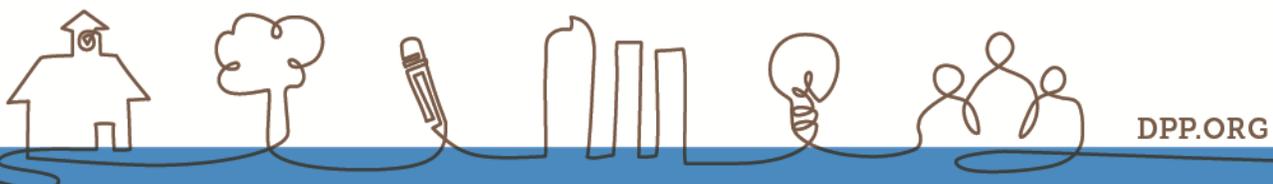
“High-quality preschool can help close the early achievement gap and ensure that more kids are graduating from high school on time,” says Jennifer Landrum, President and CEO of DPP, a sales tax-funded initiative that extends preschool tuition support to all Denver 4-year-olds. “Children who have learned to read by third grade are ready to read to learn in the years that follow.”

A total of 64 percent of DPP children posted advanced or proficient reading scores compared to 58 percent of non-DPP students. Just as significant, students who participated in DPP were less likely to receive unsatisfactory TCAP reading scores than their non-DPP peers; 13 percent of DPP enrollees earned unsatisfactory scores compared to 19 percent of non-DPP third-graders.

Since the 2009-2010 school year, annual evaluations of DPP graduates have revealed that the vast majority – over 90 percent on multiple measures – are leaving preschool ready for kindergarten both academically and social-emotionally.

“This is the first large group of DPP children to reach third grade and the first analysis to confirm school-readiness of DPP children persists through their early elementary years,” said Landrum.

Just over 3,000 DPS third-graders previously enrolled in DPP accounted for 47 percent of DPS third-graders tested on the English and Spanish versions of TCAP reading this past spring. A slightly larger proportion (74 percent) of third-graders who participated in DPP were eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL) than those who did not (69 percent). Additionally, a larger proportion of DPP students (47 percent) identified as English Language Learners (ELLs) than non-DPP students (41 percent).



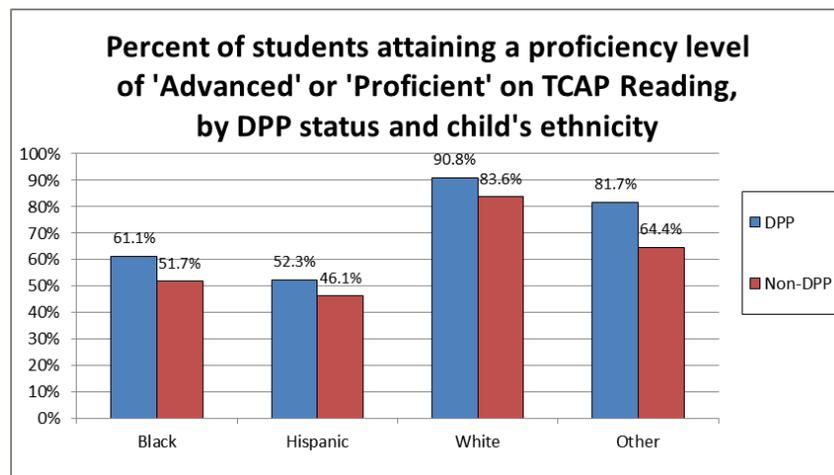
Other findings in the analysis by Augenblick, Palaich, and Associates:

Disadvantaged Students with DPP Experience Ahead of Non-DPP Peers

Although low-income students continue to lag behind their more advantaged peers, DPP students who qualified for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL) were 9.3 percent more likely to read proficiently than their non-DPP counterparts.

Every Ethnic Category of DPP Students Outperformed Non-DPP Counterparts

- A total of 61 percent of black third-graders previously enrolled in DPP reached proficiency compared to 52 percent of non-DPP students.
- Slightly more than half (52 percent) of Hispanic children with DPP experience were proficient readers, compared to 46 percent of non-DPP students.
- Over 90 percent of white third-graders with DPP experience were proficient in reading compared to 84 percent of non-DPP students.



English Language Learners Did Better Overall

DPP students who identified as English Language Learners (ELLs) were 7.2% more likely to attain proficient or advanced levels on the TCAP than their non-DPP ELL peers.

About the Denver Preschool Program

Approved by voters in 2006, the Denver Preschool Program (DPP) is a sales tax-funded initiative that generates approximately \$11 million annually to fund preschool tuition support for all Denver's 4-year-olds. Denver families can choose from a wide variety of preschools, public and community-based. During the 2012-2013 school year, 67 percent of Denver's 4-year-olds were enrolled in DPP. The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) [reports](#) that, among state-funded programs, only Florida and Oklahoma enroll a higher proportion of 4-year-olds with 79.4 percent and 74.1 percent, respectively.

i. Hernandez, Donald J. (2011) *Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation*. Annie E. Casey Foundation.