



# DEEPENING DENVER'S INVESTMENT

2016-2017 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

## DEAR FRIENDS OF THE DENVER PRESCHOOL PROGRAM,

### IN 2017 WE STRENGTHENED DENVER'S STAKE IN EARLY EDUCATION.

Not only did we celebrate 10 years of making preschool possible for every child in Denver, we also invested more than \$12 million in tuition support, distributed tuition credit dollars to 4,709 preschool students, reviewed and revised our tuition credit scale to strengthen it in ways that provide a greater impact for local families, and welcomed our 50,000th student—Wilson Silvernale—to his first day in a Denver Preschool Program provider's classroom.

But despite our many achievements, there are

persistent barriers to early education in our community that must be addressed.

**One such issue is child care deserts.** In 2017, the Center for American Progress released a report analyzing 150,000 child care providers in 22 states, including Colorado. It found that 11.5 percent of neighborhoods in Denver severely lack quality affordable care.

This is why the Denver Preschool Program exists. We work diligently to ensure every Denver 4-year-old has an equal opportunity to succeed in life, starting with high quality early education. Thus far, we've helped more than 50,000 local families send their 4-year-olds to the preschool that best meets their needs, no matter the cost.





Nevertheless, changing economic conditions mean **our mission remains critical.**

As our organization matures, we are expanding our efforts in order to become even more effective at fulfilling our promise to the citizens of Denver who have entrusted us with preparing their children for the future.

For instance, the data we've collected during our first decade has yielded new opportunities for us to shine a light on academic areas in early childhood education, particularly those in need of extra attention. By sharing our insights, our intention is to encourage an early education system in Denver that is transparent, data-driven and responsive to the needs of children whose futures depend on it.

We're deeply grateful for your continued investment in the Denver Preschool Program. It's because of community members like you that our first class of preschoolers are entering high school, our 2010-2011 class of preschoolers are entering middle school and our 2016-2017 class of preschoolers are entering kindergarten with the skills they need to succeed.

Sincerely,



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jennifer".

**JENNIFER LANDRUM,**  
*President and CEO*







“The late educator Rita Pierson once said, ‘Every child deserves a champion, an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists they become the best they can possibly be.’ Thank you Denver, for being my champion and making preschool possible for my family.”

– Jaylah Short, DPP Kids Council member



# OUR PIONEERS

## COMING TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE TWO MAJOR MILESTONES

Last September, 10 children stood side-by-side on stage at the Denver Preschool Program's 10th Birthday Celebration to share how they are all succeeding in school. From 14-year-old Jaylah to 4-year-old Wilson, each child in the Denver Preschool Program Kids Council represents the nearly 5,000 preschool students the Denver Preschool Program has served each year, beginning ten years ago with the preschool class of 2007-2008.

The event, presented by Gary Community Investments, also marked Denver Preschool Program's 50,000-student milestone. Community members took the opportunity to applaud this achievement and offer a warm welcome to Wilson who joined the 2017-2018 preschool class.

Mayor Michael B. Hancock catches up with the Kids Council during a breakfast celebration at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science on August 12, 2017.

Graduates pictured from left to right:

*Ava Holmes, class of 2014; Gabriel Sabastian Velasquez, class of 2012; Edgar Lopez, class of 2016; Jesus Lorena, class of 2017; Mayor Michael B. Hancock; Wilson Silvernale, class of 2018; Lelonie Brown, class of 2015; Jaylah Short, class of 2008; Jennifer Landrum; Collin Goldman, class of 2013; Shreya Gurung, class of 2011; Brooklyn Luckett, class of 2010.*



# FINDING SUPPORT FOR OUR FAMILIES

## A DENVER MOM FINDS MEANINGFUL SUPPORT FOR HER TWO SONS

When Kimberly Silvernale first approached Treasureland Preschool, she was simply looking for child care near her home in Washington Park. But what she found was a warm, community-focused environment where her oldest son could improve his social-emotional skills through play.

**"Oh my gosh, you can totally tell the difference,"** Silvernale said about her oldest and his peers taming their tantrums over time. **"By the end of the year, they're able to cheerfully lead their moms into the classroom. It's amazing."**

Thrilled with her oldest son's developmental gains, Silvernale also enrolled her youngest son Wilson in Treasureland--where this time she was extended an even bigger helping hand.

**"We had always applied for Treasureland's scholarship every year,"** Silvernale said, **"but then the director, Sally Roberts, suggested**

**I check out the Denver Preschool Program. The application was super easy."**

It was also significant.

***Wilson is the 50,000th student to participate in the Denver Preschool Program.*** The honor came with an invitation to join the Denver Preschool Program Kids Council at a special breakfast with Denver Mayor Michael B. Hancock.

**"He loved it!"** Silvernale exclaimed. **"He told the Mayor he wanted to be a police officer and one of his security guards let Wilson wear his hat. They were so sweet."**

Now that his last preschool year is coming to a close, Silvernale is noticing the same positive behavioral changes in Wilson that she saw in her older son.

**"Wilson has definitely become more confident. He's learned to engage with his peers. The staff at Treasureland have walked beautifully alongside him,"** she said. **"We've had a great preschool experience."**



**TOTAL NUMBER  
OF CHILDREN**  
SERVED DURING 2016-17:

**4,709**

“Part of my job as lieutenant governor is to ensure that we protect our state’s most valuable resources, and what’s more valuable than children? Children are the foundation of our future and that is why I give my full support to the Denver Preschool Program.”

– Colorado Lt. Governor Donna Lynne”

# OUR CHALLENGE

## HOW THE TUITION CREDIT TASK FORCE HELPED MEET DENVER FAMILIES WHERE THEY ARE

Denver's demographics are changing, and for some families, that means more challenges to affording preschool. So in 2017 we decided to look into how could we use our resources to help families keep up with Denver's rising cost of living, without sacrificing quality early education opportunities.

That process involved creating the Tuition Credit Task Force: a group of nine community-minded leaders who worked diligently to restructure the current Tuition Credit Scale in a way that frees up more funds for vulnerable families.

***The Tuition Credit Scale is a tool the Denver Preschool Program has used from the start to determine the amount of financial support each family receives based on:***

- 1 Their income
- 2 The quality rating of the chosen preschool
- 3 How many hours the child attends each day

The scale is designed so that the families with the greatest financial need who have a child attending a preschool of the highest quality will receive the most tuition support, giving more families the opportunity to enroll their 4-year-old in a quality-rated preschool program of their choice.

It also guides how funds are channeled into participating programs to help them improve their quality ratings.

Thus far, the Tuition Credit Scale has seen minor increases to keep up with changing economic conditions. But thanks to the work of the Tuition Credit Task Force, Denver families and preschool programs will now receive 10.7 percent more funds starting with the 2018-2019 school year.

This change marks the greatest one-time increase to the Tuition Credit Scale, and better reflects the costs associated with creating and taking advantage of high quality early education opportunities.

**BEGINNING  
2018-2019  
SCHOOL YEAR:**

**10.7%  
INCREASE IN  
FUNDING**





## SPECIAL THANKS TO THE TUITION CREDIT SCALE TASK FORCE

**Michael Baker,**  
*Gold Crown Management*

**Judy Ham,**  
*Ability Connection Colorado*

**Steffanie Clothier,**  
*Gary Community Investments*

**Penny May,**  
*Office of Denver Mayor  
Michael B. Hancock*

**Pamela Harris,**  
*Mile High Early Learning*

**Rob McDaniel,**  
*Metrix Advisors, LLC*

**Kara Penn (Facilitator),**  
*Mission Spark*

“Our refreshed tuition credit scale makes real our values of access for all and intentional inclusivity. We want Denver families of all socioeconomic backgrounds to have the resources they need to enroll their children in a high quality preschool, no matter what challenges they face.”

– Jennifer Landrum, DPP President and CEO

## FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL PERCENTAGES\*

**TIER 1** <100%

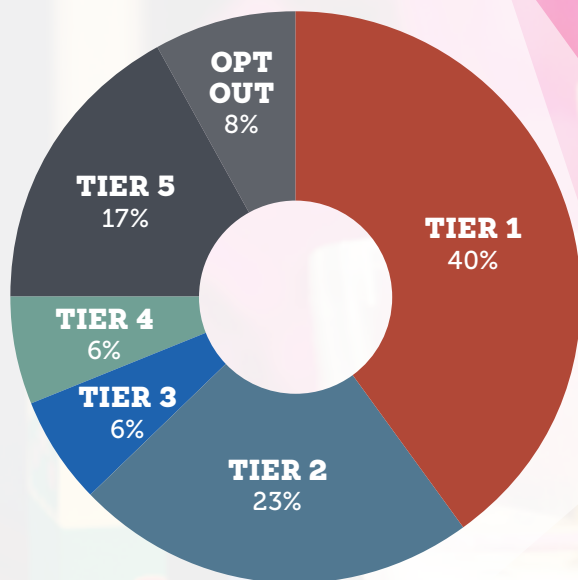
**TIER 2** 100–185%

**TIER 3** 185–300%

**TIER 4** 300–400%

**TIER 5** >400%

\*In 2017 a family of four at 100%  
of the federal poverty level earned  
less than \$24,420 per year.



## 2016–2017 INCOME TIER DISTRIBUTION



# WHO WE SERVE

## ALL CHILDREN DESERVE AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL AND LIFE.

Tuition credits from the Denver Preschool Program are available to every Denver family—regardless of income or neighborhood—who has a 4-year-old enrolled in a participating program in their year before kindergarten.

Learn more about the total number of children we served during the 2016-2017 school year.

## WHERE STUDENTS ATTENDED PRESCHOOL

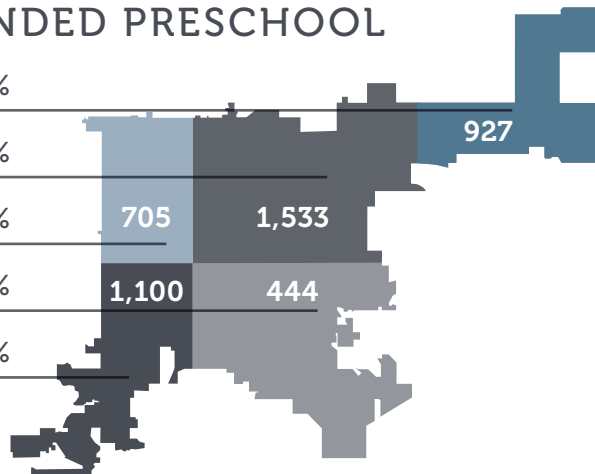
**FNE** 20%

**NE** 33%

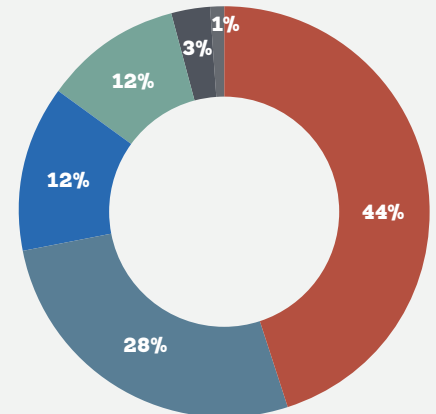
**NW** 15%

**SE** 9%

**SW** 23%



**TOTAL NUMBER** 251  
OF PROGRAMS (2016-17):



## CHILDREN SERVED BY ETHNICITY

**44% HISPANIC**

**28% WHITE (NOT OF HISPANIC ORIGIN)**

**12% BLACK (NOT OF HISPANIC ORIGIN)**

**12% OTHER**

**3% ASIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER**

**1% AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKAN NATIVE**

# OUR IMPACT

## PROOF THAT PRESCHOOL MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Our mission is built on a foundation of research that asserts high quality preschool prepares children for success in kindergarten and beyond. We have evaluated short- and long-term outcomes of children in our program every school year since 2007-2008 to ensure the children we serve are learning the skills they need to thrive.

In 2017 we published a brief outlining the results from the annual Kindergarten Readiness study for the first time. The brief summarizes a study conducted by Clayton Early Learning that examined how a representative sample of 200 participating students progressed from the fall to the spring of the 2015-2016 preschool school year in five key areas: receptive vocabulary, literacy, math, social-emotional development and executive function (sustained attention).

The results for 2015-2016 found that, on average, children made progress in all key areas during their preschool year in a Denver Preschool Program classroom. Furthermore, children made gains above and beyond what is expected with

typical development in three of the five key areas; vocabulary, literacy, and social-emotional development.

The 2016-2017 Kindergarten Readiness Study looked at how a representative sample of 230 Denver Preschool Program preschoolers progressed in the same key areas, but classified their spring scores into five categories that reflect their level of readiness: Lagging Behind, Approaching, Meeting, Exceeding and Excelling expectations. Children develop at different rates so it was unlikely that a child scored the same in every domain. Using this sorting method, children whose scores fell between the Approaching and Excelling ranges were considered ready for kindergarten.

== 82-88% ==  
OF SAMPLED PRESCHOOLERS  
RECEIVED A SCORE THAT  
INDICATED THEY WERE PREPARED TO  
**SUCCEED IN  
KINDERGARTEN**





## OUT-OF-SCHOOL INFLUENCES AND KINDERGARTEN READINESS

We continually strive to understand how factors outside of the education environment make a difference in a child's opportunities to do well in preschool.

For instance, 926 children (23 percent) who participated in a Denver Preschool Program preschool program during the 2016-2017 school year were dual language learners from Spanish-speaking households. These students were assessed in English and Spanish at the beginning and end of their preschool year.

Their spring assessment scores in English, on average, showed a slight increase from fall, but were lower than their English-only peers and lower than kindergarten readiness benchmarks.

Meanwhile, their spring assessment scores in Spanish, on average, showed a slight increase from fall, they reached kindergarten readiness benchmarks and they made gains above and beyond typical development in Spanish literacy.

Across both English and Spanish spring assessments, 82-88 percent of bilingual children scores' fell between the Approaching and Excelling range for kindergarten readiness in at least one language.

**These findings echo current research regarding the learning patterns of dual language learners and in general, points to DPP providers supporting bilingual language development.**

### Overall, results from the 2016-2017 Kindergarten Readiness Study concluded:

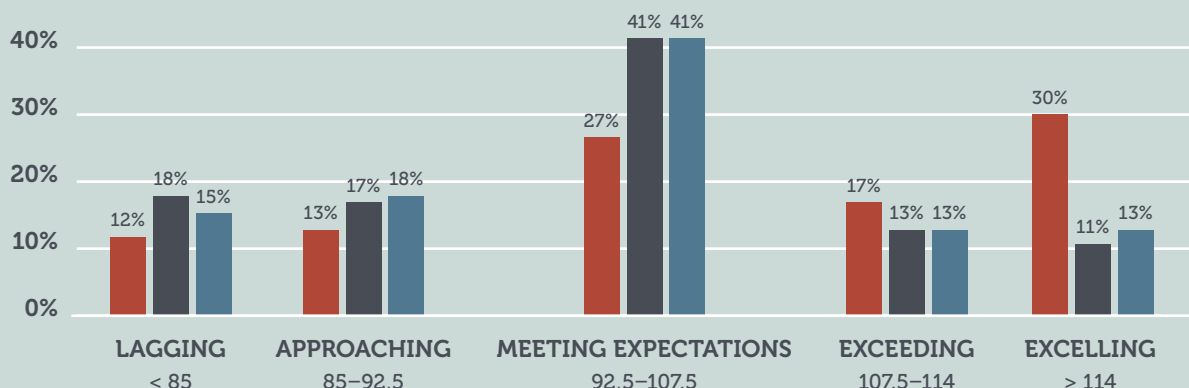
- *The majority of children entered kindergarten at acceptable readiness levels.*
- *Children stayed on track with typical development in vocabulary, literacy and math during their Denver Preschool Program preschool year.*
- *Children made gains in math above and beyond typical developmental expectations during their Denver Preschool Program preschool year.*

## SPRING 2017

## PRE-ACADEMIC PROFICIENCY IN SPRING PRIOR TO KINDERGARTEN

**PROPORTION BY PROFICIENCY LEVEL:**  
BEST SCORE AS TESTED IN EITHER ENGLISH OR SPANISH

VOCABULARY  
EARLY LITERACY  
MATH







View the full report at  
[dpp.org/research-and-results/our-results](https://dpp.org/research-and-results/our-results)

# EARLY EDUCATORS

## GOING THE DISTANCE FOR DENVER'S FUTURE

Teaching small children is no small task. It takes patience, creativity and sometimes a second language. Just ask Mary, a bilingual preschool teacher at Pascual LeDoux Academy in southwest Denver. Mary has spent the past five years of her 23-year career in early education, putting her own acquired Spanish skills to use in Pascual LeDoux's language acquisition room.

**It was there, surrounded by color and crafts,** that she recently helped take three English Language Learners (two of Mexican descent and one of Vietnamese descent) from very little proficiency to knowing all of their letters and their numbers up to 25.

**"It's so exciting,"** Mary says. **"They didn't even know these skills in their native languages and now they're excelling in both because we never stop speaking their native languages with them or their parents."**

But Mary readily admits that reaching these triumphs can be tough.

**"Every year, we have a lot of students come in who haven't been exposed to books at all. We also have a lot of kids who have experienced trauma and need to be loved all day long, so it's tricky figuring out what each child needs every minute of the day."**

Thankfully, she is not alone. Mary is one of hundreds of early learning professionals who receive support from partner organizations like the Denver Preschool Program. For example, both Mary and her colleague Craig have received Denver Preschool Program achievement awards for their excellent Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®) ratings. CLASS® is an independent observation instrument the Denver Preschool Program uses to assess the quality of teacher-child interactions.

On top of achievement awards, the Denver Preschool Program also offers preschools and their staff a variety of quality improvement resources like classroom materials, professional development opportunities and one-on-one coaching to help teachers understand how to best engage young learners.



Mary joyfully guides a group of preschoolers through their daily math lesson before lunch and recess.

The coaching, in particular has been beneficial for Craig. **"It's really nice working at a center like Pascual LeDoux with so many preschool classrooms, because we can collaborate together. We work as a team, trying to improve our CLASS® scores and to help parents become more knowledgeable about what's out there,"** Craig said, touching on another barrier to preschool: awareness.

**"I think for us, the biggest challenge has been getting our families the support**

**they need, especially families with low socioeconomic status. A lot of times, they're working multiple jobs to make ends meet and don't know soon enough that there are so many services out there,"** Craig continued.

**"I am extremely grateful there is a program that recognizes the need that we have in the southwest area of Denver, and that there is funding to help our students and parents. This is fabulous,"** Mary added.

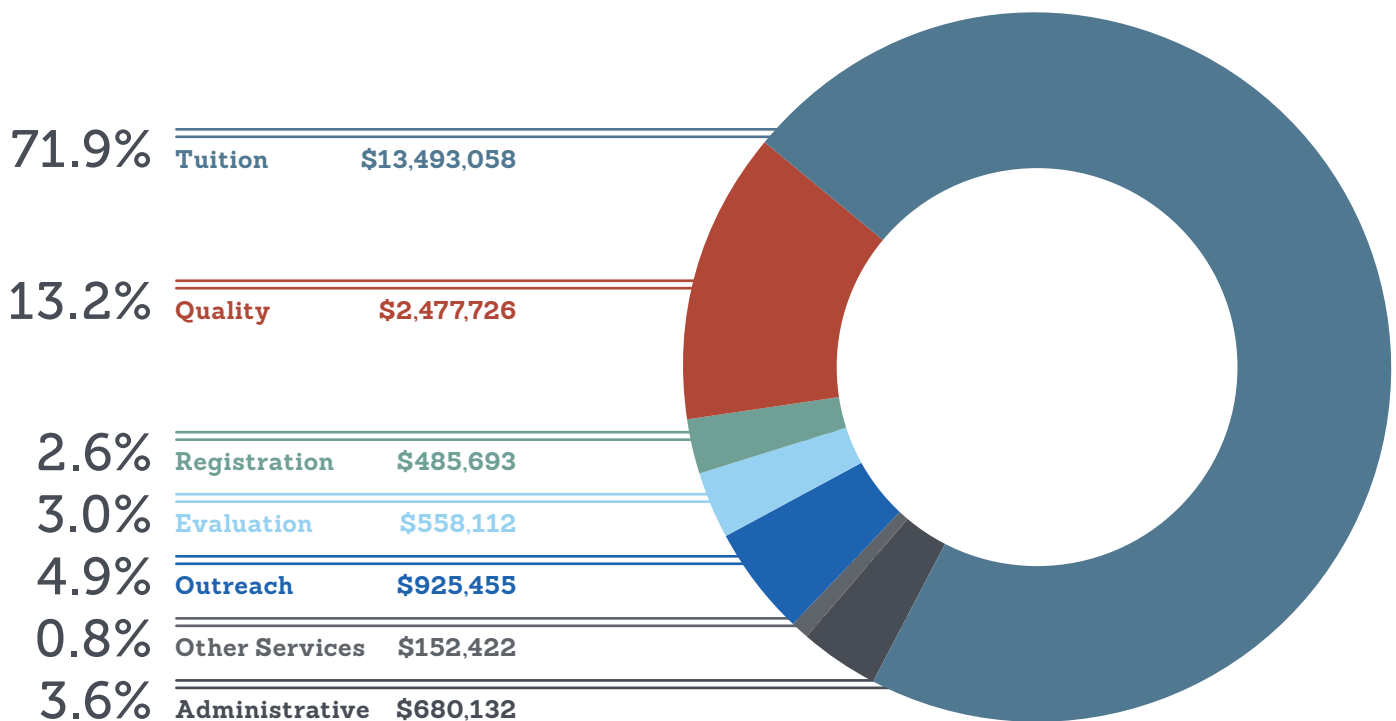


# OUR EXPENDITURES

## 2017 CALENDAR YEAR AUDITED FINANCIALS

As a steward of public funds, we hold ourselves to the highest standard of accountability.

This is how we used your tax dollars during the 2017 calendar year toward expanding access to high quality preschool in Denver.



## 2017 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## **DENVER PRESCHOOL PROGRAM STAFF**

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*Chris Miller, Director of Quality Initiatives*

*Marina Mendoza, Director of Enrollment and Evaluation*

*Tricia Nelson, Communications Manager*

*Angeles Ross, Office Manager*

*Phillip Perrin, 2017 Director of Enrollment and Evaluation*

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