

2015

REPORT TO THE
COMMUNITY



INVESTING IN INNOVATION

INCREASING ACCESS



DEAR FRIENDS OF THE DENVER PRESCHOOL PROGRAM,
IN 2015 WE REACHED SOLID GROUND.

As we approach the 10-year anniversary of Denver Preschool Program's formation in late 2006, we want to take a moment to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of everyone who played an integral role in strengthening our foundation...**thank you.**

When key community champions set out on this journey to give every 4-year-old access to high quality preschool, they were laying the groundwork to build a more prosperous Mile High City. And when it came time for Denver to decide if our work ought to continue beyond 2016, voters stepped up to the polls to renew and expand Denver Preschool Program, calling us to achieve new milestones.

The renewal of the Denver Preschool Tax in 2014 not only secured Denver Preschool Program's future until 2026, but also gave us the opportunity to make changes to improve how we make preschool possible for Denver's youngest learners. These efforts included bringing back funding for summer preschool; merging our Board of Directors and Board of Advisors into one streamlined governing body; conducting focus groups to learn how to better communicate with parents; and launching a new Quality Improvement (QI) framework to strengthen our partnership with preschool teachers and ensure high quality programs are available across the city.

As you will learn, the QI framework is an ongoing evaluation and investment



system that transitions the focus of quality preschool from an overall program improvement strategy to an individualized teacher support strategy.

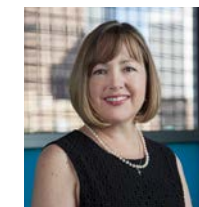
Just as we've redefined our metrics, we've also adjusted how we address education disparities. Through the years we've learned that Denver's ability to provide preschool varies significantly across neighborhoods. For that reason, going forward we are utilizing tools such as a capacity study and neighborhood data to identify where to invest to support more preschool students in higher quality programs. We're also engaging organizations and individuals already working at the neighborhood level to form partnerships that will ensure access, quality and choice exist equally throughout our city.

Denver Preschool Program is a national leader in preschool innovation, but we can always do more. To stay on the cutting edge, parents can expect changes to the website to make applying for tuition support easier, programs can expect increased resources to address achievement gaps, and teachers can look forward to more professional development opportunities.

Thank you again for allowing us to help parents do what's best for their children's education.

Before closing, we would like to acknowledge former board member and friend David Cole of David J. Cole and Associates who sadly we lost in 2015. David was a longtime community activist and was instrumental in securing Denver Preschool Program's reauthorization in 2014. We will miss David and dedicate this report to his memory.

Jennifer Landrum, President and CEO



JENNIFER LANDRUM,
PRESIDENT AND CEO



PRESCHOOL IS FOR **EVERY** 4-YEAR-OLD CHILD

HOW ONE PRESCHOOL PROVIDER TACKLES PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO EDUCATION

A quality preschool experience prepares every child for success in kindergarten and beyond despite differences in neighborhood, native language, or socioeconomic background. That is why Denver Preschool Program makes preschool possible to all Denver families with a 4-year-old in their last year before kindergarten. Nevertheless, many local parents still assume they don't have access, which is where early childhood education advocates like Marisol Chavez step in.

Chavez is the preschool administrator of Mountain View Child Care Center in Southwest Denver where 28 percent of Denver Preschool Program tuition support was distributed in 2014-2015. In the past few years she's helped several families afford tuition by guiding them through DPP's tuition support application. "Since Mountain View is a private school, parents assume it's too expensive," she said. "But with Denver Preschool Program, they don't have to worry."

Chavez also helps parents overcome their fears. "I have parents that stop by and you can feel they're nervous," she said. "It can be a challenge to get their kids enrolled." However, Chavez assures them that Mountain View's preschool classrooms embrace all of the diverse cultures in the surrounding community.

As a result, enrollment is up. "We've seen a huge increase in students over the years thanks to DPP. It's definitely met all of our expectations."

"I've seen a lot of progress in my daughter. Before preschool, Ximena was full of energy and didn't know what to do with her time. But now that she's been coming to school, she loves practicing writing her name and numbers. She's also more interested in grabbing a book and can better focus her attention."

— Maria Juliana, parent of Ximena, a Denver Preschool Program student

SUCCESS IN KINDERGARTEN **AND BEYOND**

TUITION SUPPORT

DPP HELPS TAKE PRESSURE OFF OF PARENTS

All Denver families of 4-year-olds—regardless of income or neighborhood—can receive tuition credits that lower monthly out-of-pocket costs. Tuition credits are distributed based on a sliding scale, which takes into consideration a family's income, household size, and the quality rating of the chosen preschool program. That means a low income family who enrolls their child in the highest quality preschool program for a full workday would receive the most support.

Denver Preschool Program partners with nearly 250 quality-rated preschool sites within the City and County of Denver. Sites include community-based centers, family child care homes and Denver Public Schools classrooms. With the wide-variety of preschool options, a family can choose the program, location, and schedule that best meets their child's needs.

Since 2007, Denver Preschool Program has invested over 67 million dollars in tuition support. During the 2014-2015 school year, DPP invested approximately 10.9 million dollars, which helped 4,370 children attend a quality-rated preschool.

The typical student receiving tuition support comes from a family at or below 100 percent of the poverty level, attending a level 4 (out of five) quality preschool for a full school day. Families fitting this profile received \$477 a month in tuition support.

2014-2015 SCHOOL YEAR

\$10.9 MILLION



IN TUITION SUPPORT

MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR

4,370

CHILDREN TO ATTEND PRESCHOOL

WITH AN AVERAGE FULL DAY SUPPORT OF \$319/MO



Preschool tuition can be as much as some in-state college tuition. Families at all income levels benefit from having the economic pressure of child care eased.

— Cheryl Caldwell, Director of Early Education, Denver Public Schools



YEAR-ROUND PRESCHOOL RETURNS

LEARNING DOESN'T STOP DURING THE SUMMER

On March 7, 2015, Denver Preschool Program was excited to join Mayor Michael B. Hancock to announce the return of tuition support for families of 4-year-old students through the summer months.

Summer tuition support was originally available through Denver Preschool Program in 2008 and 2009, but was discontinued due to a sharp decrease in sales tax revenue. However, thanks to a successful ballot initiative and a strong economy, families with children in community-based programs can once again receive help with the cost of tuition year-round.

In the summer of 2015, Denver Preschool Program served more than 900 children at 125 community-based preschools.

Seventy-seven percent of those students attended a top-rated school like Clayton Early Learning in Far Northeast Denver—the region where the majority of summer funding was provided.

Clayton is one of several preschool sites in Denver whose doors remain open during the summer months when Denver Public Schools classrooms are closed. Children who will be heading off to kindergarten in the fall—whether or not they were enrolled in Denver Preschool Program throughout their preschool year—have the option of receiving summer tuition support at an available community-based program.

“Summer preschool, especially for children who have not had an opportunity to attend a structured program, provides a preview of kindergarten. For those who have attended preschool for just one school year, continued attendance through the summer helps them maintain learning gains and further progress in their readiness for academic success.”

— Charlotte Brantley, President and CEO, Clayton Early Learning

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GOING FROM GOOD ^{to} GREAT

LOOKING WITHIN TO BETTER REACH OUT

From our preschool partners to our preschool teachers, everyone involved with Denver Preschool Program is committed to continuous improvement—and that includes us. Hence, in addition to equipping our preschool partners with tools to identify their strengths and improve their weaknesses, we believe it is critical to assess our own. For instance, when we saw applications for tuition support decline for several years, Denver Preschool Program enlisted the help of OMNI Institute (OMNI) to investigate why.

OMNI is a Denver-based nonprofit social science research firm that worked closely with Denver Preschool Program partners and staff to facilitate guided discussions with parents and caregivers, to evaluate Denver Preschool Program's outreach strategies.

Denver Preschool Program would like to express its appreciation to the following contributing community partners: Clínica Tepayac, Bear Valley Library, Denver Health, Families First, Focus Points, Green Valley Ranch Public Library, Invest in Kids, Padres & Jóvenes Unidos and Sam Gary Library.

These six focus groups brought together a diverse gathering of parents and caregivers, nine preschool providers, and six community parent liaisons from neighborhoods with low and high Denver Preschool Program enrollment to gather information around five areas:

1. DPP AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING
2. INFORMATION AND OUTREACH
3. COMMUNICATIONS MATERIALS
4. PRESCHOOL OUTREACH ISSUES
5. BARRIERS TO ENROLLMENT

Two immediate priorities arose; the need to clarify the preschool/Denver Preschool Program enrollment process, as well as personalizing how Denver Preschool Program talks to its parents.

DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNER JEREMIAH LIFTS OFF AT EARLY EXCELLENCE PROGRAM OF DENVER

CHOOSING A PRESCHOOL THAT IS A GOOD FIT FOR A CHILD IS AN EXCITING ALBEIT OVERWHELMING TASK. Parents must consider factors like cost, location, length of day, and now more than ever language due to rising diversity in Denver where 31 percent of the total county population is Hispanic¹.

As a result, Denver Preschool Program preschools offer services in both English and Spanish to ensure Latino families like Alma, and her grandson, Jeremiah, who is a dual language learner have access to the same quality classroom instruction as mono-lingual English speakers.

Alma's grandson, Jeremiah, represents the 24.1 percent of American children who attended preschool during the 2014-2015 school year and speak primarily Spanish at home². Studies have

shown that dual language learners tend to have better memory, mental flexibility and self-control than their single language counterparts, which helps them flourish even more in the appropriate classroom environment³.

Since Jeremiah entered Miss Bianca's class, Alma has observed his improvement in reading, writing and math in both English and Spanish; he's also not as shy as he once was. *"He's an only child,"* Alma explained, *"so preschool helps teach him things he can't learn at home like how to share and interact with other children in class."*

Driven by Jeremiah's progress, Alma has encouraged her relatives with young children to enroll in a Denver Preschool Program preschool and apply for tuition support.

"I think Denver Preschool Program is a good program, and now my other grandson will be attending Early Excellence next year. We're excited!"



¹Piscopo, L. (2015) The Status of Denver's Children: A Community Resource 2015. Denver Office of Children's Affairs. 13: [https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/713/documents/2014_Data--Lisa/Status of Denver's Children 2015 A Community Resource.pdf](https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/713/documents/2014_Data--Lisa/Status%20of%20Denver's%20Children%202015%20A%20Community%20Resource.pdf)

²Anon. (2015) Office of Head Start – Services Snapshot National All Programs (2014-2015). The Office of Head Start. 3: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/data/psr/2015/services-snapshot-all-programs-2014-2015.pdf>

³Anon. (2014, March 18) Dual Language Learners and Socio-Emotional Development: Understanding The Benefits For Young Children. Child Trends. Retrieved from <http://www.childtrends.org/dual-language-learners-and-social-emotional-development-understanding-the-benefits-for-young-children/>



MAKING MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS IN DENVER

OUT OF THE CLASSROOM,
INTO THE COMMUNITY

The first step in getting more children in the classroom at an earlier age is reaching their parents, which is why we make an ongoing effort to initiate conversations at the neighborhood level.

We frequently attend community events throughout the city like Denver Days, Destination Health, and Fiesta Cookout to reach out to families of young children where, when and in what language they are most comfortable.

We also visit with local cultural, spiritual, education and wellness leaders to spread the awareness and impact of Denver Preschool Program.

In 2015, Denver Preschool Program attended more than 50 events and gave more than 60 community presentations.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

THE FUTURE IS NOW

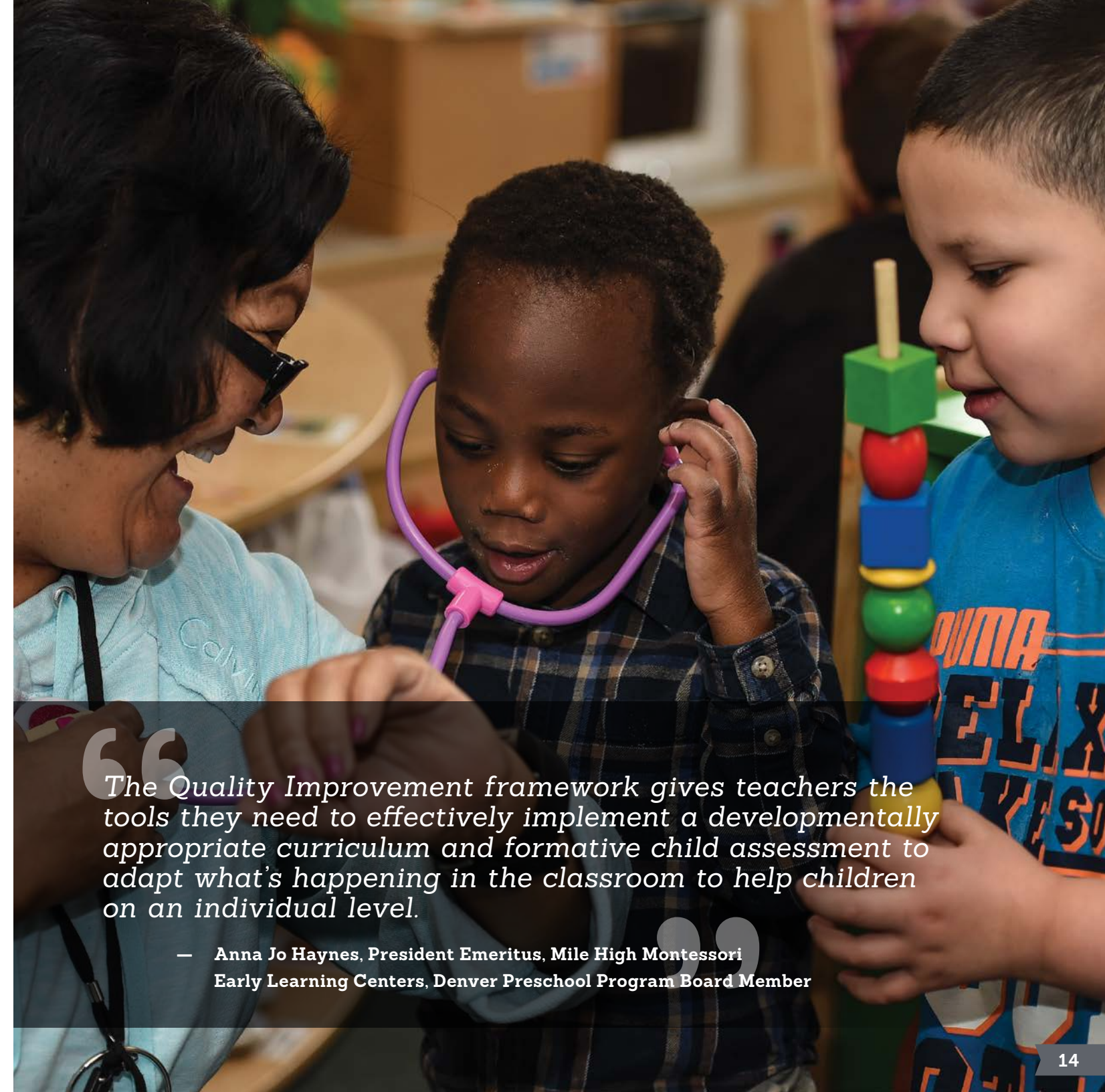
Ever since Denver voters first supported preschool in 2006, it has been Denver Preschool Program's goal to continuously raise the bar on delivering quality education to Denver's youngest citizens.

From the 2007-2008 through the 2012-2013 school years, we used the Qualistar Rating™ to evaluate program quality. In the 2013-2014 school year we added the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®) to create our own Denver Preschool Program Classroom Rating with increased emphasis on the quality of teacher-child interactions in the classroom, to ensure Denver Preschool Program children are being emotionally supported and cognitively challenged. In February 2015, we transitioned with the rest of the state to the Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), which added new rating components in child health, as well as leadership, management and administration.

Denver Preschool Program's goal has been to continuously innovate and target our quality improvement resources to areas of greatest

impact, and we're pleased to announce a new teacher-centric Quality Improvement (QI) framework launched during the 2015-2016 school year. The framework is built around Denver Preschool Program core values of **intentional teaching, highly effective teachers, and positive teacher-child interactions** and includes investments in professional development and early childhood coursework, targeted coaching for directors and teachers, and classroom learning materials.

We believe a child's growth and learning significantly improve when their teacher is prepared and engaged. As a result, the QI framework includes a comprehensive support system that awards programs, program directors, and teachers for achieving certain milestones. Milestones include demonstrating high quality teacher-child interactions, effective use of a curriculum and conducting ongoing formative child assessments that guides instruction to meet the needs of every child in the classroom.



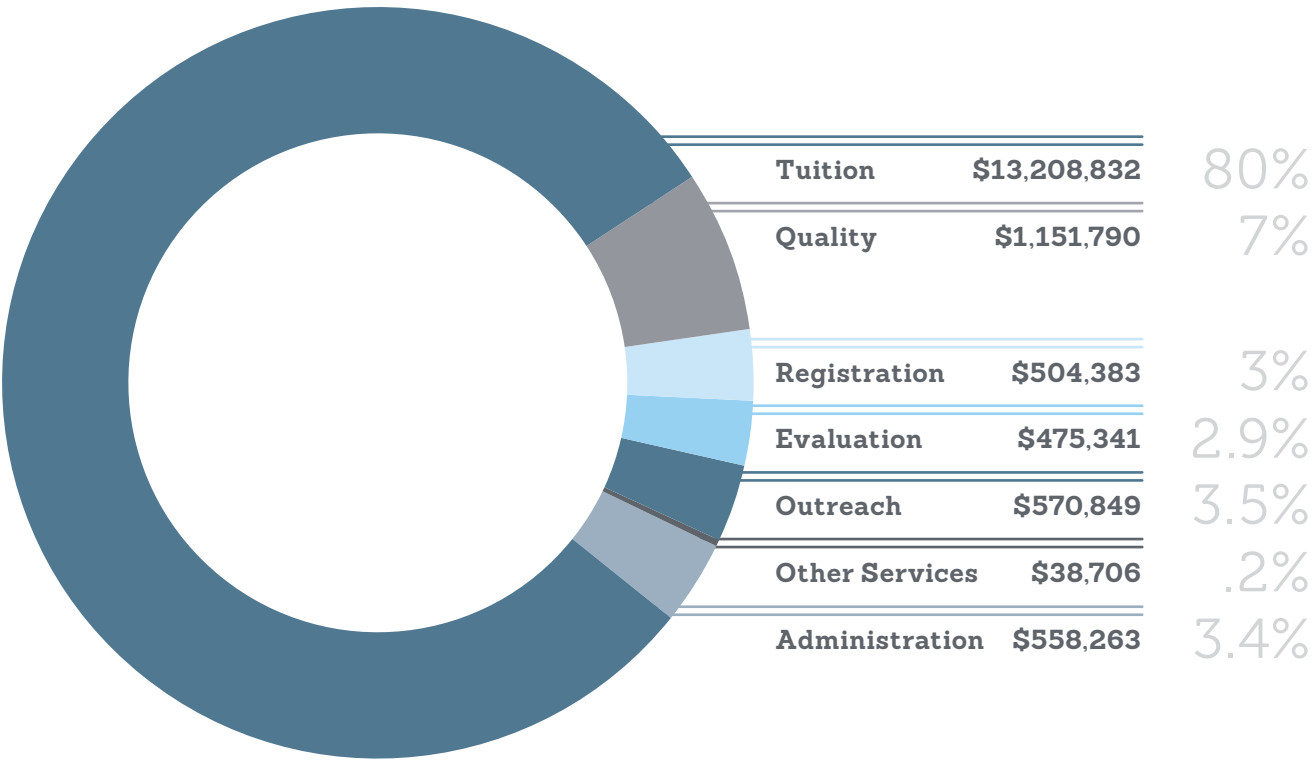
“The Quality Improvement framework gives teachers the tools they need to effectively implement a developmentally appropriate curriculum and formative child assessment to adapt what's happening in the classroom to help children on an individual level.”

— Anna Jo Haynes, President Emeritus, Mile High Montessori
Early Learning Centers, Denver Preschool Program Board Member

EXPENDITURES

2015 CALENDAR YEAR -
AUDITED FINANCIALS
WHERE WE INVEST YOUR TAX DOLLARS

2015 AUDITED REVENUE DISTRIBUTION



“If you’re going to ask preschool teachers to be vulnerable and assess themselves, we have to be brave and assess ourselves. That way Denver Preschool Program can invest tax-dollars in what we know makes a difference.”

— Zach Hochstadt, Founding Partner, Mission Minded,
Denver Preschool Program Board Member

PASCUAL LEDOUX
HELPS JOSUE FIND HIS VOICE

THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL CAN BE SCARY FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS. Just ask Liliana, a mom of two from Juarez, Mexico. Soon after moving to Denver in 2014, the day arrived for her son Josue to walk through the doors of Pascual LeDoux Academy; yet it was Liliana who needed the extra push.

“I was nervous because I thought it might be too early for him to start school since my older son began at 5-years-old,” she said. “But I had a good reference that preschool would teach him how to read and prepare him for kindergarten.”

Liliana also hesitated because Josue struggled to verbally express himself at home, and would often tug at her clothes to communicate. Much to her delight, Josue’s teachers were equipped to nurture his vocabulary and language development to help him gain confidence over time.

With kindergarten now on the horizon, Liliana can’t help but smile when reflecting on how far her son has come.

“Josue has learned a lot,” she said. “Before, he couldn’t use more than a few words at a time, but now he speaks in full sentences and won’t shut up!”



GOVERNANCE

THE PEOPLE BEHIND DENVER PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

To strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of the Denver Preschool Program, changes were made to its governing ordinance in 2014 including the decision to merge the Denver Preschool Program Board of Directors and Board of Advisors.

We would like to thank our final consortium of advisors for their service: Linda Adams, Charlotte Brantley, Betty C. de Baca, Gerie Grimes, Evi Bachrach Makovsky, Ginger Maloney, Lee Reichert, Anne Rowe, Lem Smith, David Suppes, and Dr. Stephen Vogler.

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Janice Sinden, Office of Mayor Michael B. Hancock

Susan Steele, Buell Foundation

“The strength of the Board of Directors is a critical component to the success of the Denver Preschool Program. Together, we are committed to inspiring and leading early childhood education efforts in Denver to benefit our kids and community.”

— Mike Yankovich, President and CEO, Children's Museum Denver
Marsico Campus, Denver Preschool Program Board Chair



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Ellen Braun, Director of Communications
David Collins, Director of Operations
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