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An Evaluation of the Denver Preschool Program: 2009-10

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Executive Summary

The Denver Preschool Program (DPP) was created to encourage the families of children in the year before kindergarten to voluntarily participate in quality preschool programs and thus increase the likelihood that children will be successful in kindergarten and beyond. Denver voters approved the Preschool Matters initiative in November 2006. Under this ballot initiative, the city collects a .12 cent sales tax which is earmarked for DPP. Beginning in January 2007, Denver expected to collect about \$11 million annually. Actual collections totaled \$10.2 million in 2009 and are expected to reach \$10.7 million in 2010. The vast majority of this revenue, 80%, is used to provide tuition credits to the parents of children in the last year of preschool and to provide grants to preschools to improve the quality of the programs they offer. Five percent is used to administer the program and the remaining 15% is paid to contractors to undertake program operations and to evaluate the program.

This report summarizes the results of the third-year evaluation of DPP which was performed by Augenblick, Palaich and Associates Inc. (APA) in partnership with the Clayton Early Learning Institute. The goal of this annual evaluation is to provide DPP with information about how well the program is achieving its objectives. During the 2009-2010 school year, APA worked with DPP's staff, board and partners to collect data. Throughout the year this data was used to identify ways to make mid-course adjustments and ensure that the program's systems were as effective and efficient as possible.

In less than four years, DPP has grown from a highly contested but successful ballot initiative into an important presence in preschool education in the city of Denver. During this time, DPP staff, board members and operating partners have worked hard to create an environment favorable to the development of the program. The success of their efforts is shown by the increasing number of families and providers participating in the program. Through June 2010, the following milestones had been achieved:

- A total of 164 providers, operating at 273 sites with 566 classrooms serving DPP enrolled students, were on track to be approved as DPP providers;¹
- A total of 5,921 children in 2009-10 received approval for DPP tuition credits;
- Of the 273 sites on track to become DPP approved, 257 had received their approval. Of these, 54 had received a Qualistar rating of 4 Stars, and 138 sites had received a Qualistar rating of 3 Stars, the two highest ratings; and
- A total of 127 classrooms at 74 sites completed the re-rating process.

The number of families that received approval for DPP tuition credits varied across income tiers, by primary language spoken at home and by geographic region of the city. On surveys, in focus groups, and

¹ A provider is a label used by DPP to describe the organizations that run preschool programs in either a single building or multiple buildings. Individual building locations are called sites. For example, Denver Public Schools is considered one provider that in 2009-2010 operated over 80 ECE (preschool) sites.

in interviews with DPP participants, parents and providers repeatedly described the early learning environment for four year olds as exciting and positive.

Another important indicator of DPP's success in 2009-2010 is the number of sites that engaged in the Qualistar process for the first time. A significant number of preschool sites, 27, joined this process to improve the quality of services they offer to families and children. This is similar to the number that entered the process in 2008-2009, 39.

The 2009-2010 year also saw the first classrooms that had been Qualistar rated go through the re-rating process. DPP requires that sites go through the re-rating process with Qualistar every two years. This year 127 classrooms at 74 sites completed the re-rating process. Forty percent of the sites increased their star rating, while 56% stayed the same and four percent decreased their rating. At the classroom level, only nine percent of classrooms that went through the re-rating process saw a decrease in their Qualistar rating.

In this third year of the program, staff, board members and operating partners continued to conduct business in an effective manner in an economic environment that was extraordinarily challenging. The Program was focused and responsive while operating within difficult fiscal constraints. Based on data collected from numerous points of contact between the program and the Denver community, the evaluator concluded that DPP has a very solid base of public support among the program's core constituents. This good will among core constituents opens channels of communication, encourages families from all income tiers to participate in the program, and encourages providers to improve the quality of the services they offer.

The program faces several challenges in the coming years that are critical to the continued success of the program:

- ***Managing DPP's finances and tuition credits offered in difficult financial times.*** DPP is a unique program in Denver. It has a dedicated income stream, a limited fiscal reserve, with a demand for its services that changes from year to year. Staff and board members interviewed this year expressed a belief that the organization's business management practices were up to the task of managing the program's explosive growth and changing financial circumstances. Whether these beliefs are validated over time will be examined in future evaluations. The management systems and forecasting tools in place today are working and are viewed as functioning much more smoothly than in any past year of the program's operation.
- ***Strengthening DPP's partnership with Denver Public Schools (DPS).*** DPP's partnership with DPS is a unique and strong relationship that is becoming more efficient. DPS has expanded the operating hours of its preschool (ECE) services and enhanced the quality of its program. DPP's focus on quality and the tuition credit program have been instrumental in encouraging DPS to make these changes. This partnership has brought high quality preschool programming to significant numbers of lower-income and language-minority families.

The DPP-DPS joint registration process in 2009-2010 ran significantly more smoothly than in the previous year. The interaction between DPS and ACS, DPP's registration contractor, was characterized as very good from both sides. The only remaining concern is the handling of birth

certificates. The practice of allowing a parent to register a child using a nick name rather than the child's official name, for example, enrolling a child as "Johnny" rather than Jonathan, can result in future record keeping problems. Both sides are working to address this concern.

Parental understanding of the role that DPP plays in supporting the school district's effort is a continuing area of concern. In addition, other providers are particularly interested in how DPS' participation in DPP affects the Denver market for preschool services. Sound evaluation data and good communication are needed to keep this relationship mutually beneficial.

- ***Identifying methods for attracting additional home providers into DPP.*** DPP has made exceptional progress in finding a way to encourage DPS and the vast majority of community providers to participate in the program. Though they enroll fewer students, licensed home providers are the "last frontier" for DPP. Home providers offer a number of reasons for not participating in DPP including not having a steady supply of children in the year before kindergarten and not being able to spend the time away from their business needed for staff development and training. If DPP is serious about recruiting home providers, different approaches that accommodate the needs of these providers will be needed.
- ***Continuing to recruit providers that serve culturally and linguistically diverse families.*** This was also an area of recommended concentration in last year's evaluation report. Again this past year, due in large part to the slots available through DPS, DPP was successful in recruiting large numbers of language-minority families into the program. This is excellent news and much appreciated. Based on the evaluator's conversations with home providers in primarily Spanish language neighborhoods and with Spanish language parents in the focus group, the evaluator concluded that parents and providers not involved with the Program through DPS have less information about DPP and do not understand the program as well as those who have a connection with DPS. In the coming year, the recruiting emphasis should again focus on smaller community and home providers that effectively serve culturally and linguistically diverse families.

In short, DPP is realizing its goals and its board members and staff report that DPP is managing its financial resources well. In 2009-2010, the following conclusions can be drawn.

- More high-quality preschool programs, providers and sites operated in Denver than ever before.
- More children are participating in those high-quality preschool programs.
- Finally, there is even more diversity among participating children than in previous years of the program.

DPP is now within a few hundred students of serving 6,500 children that were projected to participate in the program when the ballot initiative was proposed in 2006.

Description of the Denver Preschool Program (DPP)

The Denver Preschool Program (DPP) was created to encourage the families with children in the year before kindergarten to voluntarily participate in quality preschool programs so that children can be successful in kindergarten and beyond. Denver voters approved the Preschool Matters initiative in November 2006. Under this ballot initiative, the city collects a .12 cent sales tax, the revenue from which is set aside for DPP. Beginning in January 2007, the city has collected between \$10 and \$11 million annually for the program, 80%, is used to provide tuition credits to the parents of children in the last year of preschool and to provide grants to preschools to improve the quality of the programs they offer. Five percent is used to administer the program and the remaining 15% is paid to contractors to undertake program operations and to evaluate the program. Although DPP began operating midway through the 2007-2008 school year, it did not become fully operational until the 2008-2009 school year. Thus the 2009-2010 school year is DPP's second year as a fully operational program.²

Program Design

DPP operates on the premise that preschool plays an important role in the behavioral and academic development of children and that participating in a high-quality preschool experience, even for only one year on a part-time basis, can have a long-term positive impact on a child.³ To promote the twin goals of encouraging families to enroll their eligible children in preschool and encouraging preschool providers to improve the quality of the services they offer, DPP provides several different types of assistance. Assistance is distributed both directly and indirectly in the following ways: (1) a DPP tuition credit to preschool providers on behalf of families, which reduces the tuition costs families must pay to enroll their children in preschools; (2) a mini-grant to preschool providers, which pays for approved supplies and materials that improve the quality of their classrooms; (3) professional development and education scholarships for preschool staff that are designed to improve their knowledge and skills; (4) financial support in the form of paying for the quality rating assessment that would have previously been charged to the preschool provider; and (5) financial support to an organization that provides hands-on assistance and coaching to preschool providers to guide them through the quality improvement process.

² For the purpose of this report, the 2007-08 school year will be referred to as 2008; the 2008-09 school year will be referred to as 2009; and the 2009-10 school year will be referred to as 2010.

³ Research exists to support this premise. For example, studies of the impacts of a controlled experiment in providing preschool in Ypsilanti, Michigan, between 1962 and 1967, with follow-up examinations of participants as recently as 2005, have shown that a quality preschool program can have long-term impacts on academic achievement in school as well as economic success later in life. Research suggests that the best results are associated with programs that emphasize language; emergent literacy; early mathematical skills; motor, social, and emotional development; health and nutrition; and parental involvement. A study of the North Carolina Abecedarian Project, a randomized trial of child care with a longitudinal follow-up to adulthood, showed that, as compared to children who did not participate in the program, 94% more participants never repeated a grade; 31% more participants graduated from high school by age 19; and 177% more participants attended college (see References).

The DPP tuition credit is an amount of money available for children of Denver residents enrolled in qualified preschool programs the year before kindergarten. The size of the credit, which ranges from \$34 to \$1,000 per month, is determined by the following four factors:

1. The typical cost to run a preschool program at each of four different **quality levels**. This cost is set by DPP;
2. A family's **income level and size**;
3. The amount of time a child attends preschool which takes into consideration **attendance** rates and **extended-time** versus **full-time** versus **part-time status**; and
4. **Other support** available to the family to pay for preschool.

A unique tuition credit for each child is calculated based on the above factors. In order to obtain a tuition credit, the child's family first applies to DPP. Applications are then reviewed by a DPP contractor, ACS, to verify income, determine whether the child will attend full-time or part-time, and ascertain whether or not there are other sources of revenue available to the family to assist with paying for preschool. If funds to help pay for preschool tuition are also available from other sources such as Head Start, the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) and the Colorado Preschool Program (CPP), the size of the DPP tuition credit is reduced by the amount provided by the other source. Once it is determined that the family and child are eligible to participate and the tuition credit has been calculated, DPP pays the money directly to the preschool provider. A provider cannot receive more than the amount of tuition charged for any particular child.

Provider Eligibility

To be eligible to receive tuition credits on behalf of children, a preschool provider must be licensed by the state of Colorado, be involved in DPP's quality improvement program, and serve children who live in Denver, although the provider can be located outside the borders of the city and county of Denver. Licensure requires a criminal background check on all persons who work at the site, health and fire inspections, and 15 hours of training every year for staff in first aid, CPR, medication administration, and universal precautions.

Program Improvement and Quality

DPP preschools must participate in a three-part quality improvement process including attendance at an introductory orientation, receipt of a quality rating, and development of a quality improvement plan. All participating preschools are assessed by and consult with DPP's quality improvement partner, Qualistar Early Learning. After initial consultation and assessment, the DPP preschool coach either awards the program a Qualistar rating or determines that the preschool already meets the DPP quality standard because it has previously been approved by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), or the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC) or has been previously rated by Qualistar Early Learning. If a preschool does not appear to be able to earn a Qualistar rating with its existing program, it can choose to defer the rating process for a period of time

and receive DPP supported coaching to increase the likelihood that the preschool will be successful when it is eventually rated.

Qualistar rates preschool classrooms using a four-star system designed to promote quality in the following five areas: (1) learning environment, (2) family partnership, (3) staff training and education, (4) adult-to-child ratios, and (5) accreditation through a national accrediting agency. DPP recognizes that higher quality care costs more, and thus raises the tuition credit available as classrooms move from 1-Star to 4-Star ratings.

DPP also allocates funds to support quality improvement efforts for each of the DPP participating providers. These funds may be used to purchase classroom equipment, materials and other resources that improve the quality of both the indoor and the outdoor learning environments or to increase the level of education and training of the provider's classroom staff and administration. Tuition assistance and scholarships may be provided to enable staff to attend college level early childhood education classes, college level courses leading to an education related degree and for approved seminars, workshops, and conferences.

Coaching services are also provided by DPP to support those classrooms that have completed the Qualistar Rating process and have received a Provisional, 1-Star or 2-Star rating. In preparation for being rated for the first time, providers may access up to a year of coaching services.

The amount of quality improvement funds allocated to a participating DPP provider is dependent on their current rating. "Introduction to quality" sites, those accessing coaching services prior to being rated, as well as providers that have completed the Qualistar rating process and have received a Provisional, 1-Star or 2-Star rating, receive \$35 per DPP approved child. Providers with a 3-Star or 4-Star Qualistar rating receive \$70 per DPP approved child. This year for new providers that joined the program after May 15, 2009, DPP offered an incentive of between \$750 and \$1,000 per site.

Sites that participate in DPP are required to go through a re-rating process with Qualistar every two years. The re-rating process allows for changes in quality to be monitored and maintains DPP's emphasis on quality improvement.

DPP Organization and Staffing

DPP is required to provide status reports to the Mayor's Office for Education and Children (MOEC), a Denver city agency. A seven member board of directors and a 25 member board of advisors oversee the program. DPP has three administrative staff: a Chief Executive Officer; a Director of Policy and Program Administration; and a Program Manager. During the past year there were personnel changes in two of these positions.

To attain a number of objectives, DPP subcontracts with the following organizations: (1) ACS provides outreach to parents, processes all tuition credit applications and time/attendance data for students, and makes the appropriate tuition credit payments directly to approved preschool providers; (2) Qualistar Early Learning educates preschool providers on the DPP quality improvement process,

monitors quality agreements between providers and DPP, and rates providers on a four-star scale; (3) the Institute of Management Accountants (IMA) provides insurance consultation to preschool providers; (4) the Denver Early Childhood Council through a subcontract with Qualistar provides coaching and technical assistance to providers and monitors quality improvement grants; and (5) Augenblick, Palaich and Associates (APA) completes an annual evaluation of DPP, subcontracting with the Clayton Early Learning Institute to assess student progress. DPP also has contracted with public relations consultants for advertising, program outreach, and other services.

Status of DPP in 2009-10⁴

Number of Children

The Denver Preschool Program grew by over 16% in the 2010 school year. The total number of children approved by DPP and receiving tuition credits grew to 5,921, up 838 from the 2009 school year. The total number of preschool providers grew from 111 to 164 with services being provided at 273 sites. Of the 5,921 DPP children, 3,659 received services at 84 DPS sites, while 2,210 received services from 155 center-based sites and 16 home-based sites. Fifty-two students were enrolled in both DPS and community sites during different times of the day. Table 1 shows the distribution of approved children enrolled in DPP-approved sites. Of the 255 DPP preschool sites, nearly half enrolled fewer than 10 students. Not surprisingly, center-based and home-based sites both were likely to enroll fewer students than DPS sites.⁵

Table 1

Number of DPP Sites by Enrolled Children By Provider Type in 2010				
	# of Sites			
# of Children Enrolled	DPS	Community Center-Based	Community Home-Based	Total
1-9	1	77	16	94
10-24	12	59	0	71
25-49	47	14	0	61
50-99	25	4	0	29
100 or more	0	1	0	1
Total	85	155	16	256*

*Total as of April, 2010 does not include the students enrolled in BOTH DPS and community sites to prevent double counting these students.

Number and Quality of Sites

⁴ The information on participating students and their families were taken from the ACS database at the Beginning of May, 2010. The information on providers was taken from the Qualistar Early Learning database at the beginning of June, 2010.

⁵ DPS sites are likely to have multiple ECE classrooms running at an individual school. Some community providers have multiple sites and several have multiple classrooms, but the number of classrooms is typically fewer than the DPS sites. Home sites typically do not have "classrooms" and most often have 10 or fewer children.

While more than 74% of DPP preschool sites were 3 or 4-Star rated Qualistar programs in 2010, quality ratings varied substantially by the type of preschool. The vast majority of DPS preschools, 94%, were rated as 3 or 4-Stars, while 63.2% of community-based preschools and 31.3% of home-based preschools were rated at 3 or 4-Stars. Because many of the home providers were new to DPP and the quality rating process, fewer achieved 3 or 4-Stars. Of the home-based preschool providers, 37.5% currently participate in the “Intro to Quality” phase, which enables the provider to prepare for a quality rating assessment by working with a coach for a year. The distribution of preschools by quality rating and provider type is shown below in Table 2.

Table 2

Number of DPP Approved Preschool Sites by Quality Rating; Percent Within Each Provider Type as of April, 2010								
Star Rating	DPS		Community Center-Based		Community Home-Based		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1-Star	0	0.0%	3	1.9%	0	0.0%	3	1.2%
2-Star	4	4.8%	24	15.5%	2	12.5%	30	11.8%
3-Star	61	72.6%	65	41.9%	4	25.0%	130	51.0%
4-Star	18	21.4%	33	21.3%	1	6.3%	52	20.4%
In Process	0	0.0%	9	5.8%	2	12.5%	11	4.3%
Intro to Quality	0	0.0%	12	7.7%	6	37.5%	18	7.1%
Provisional	0	0.0%	1	0.6%	1	6.3%	2	0.8%
Missing	1	1.2%	8	5.2%	0	0.0%	9	3.5%
Total	84	100.0%	155	100.0%	16	100.0%	255	100.0%

The vast majority of students in both community and DPS preschools were enrolled in 3 or 4-star Star rated programs. Seventy-five percent of students who attend center-based preschools and 93% who attend DPS preschools were in 3 or 4-Star rated preschools. Only 41% of the students enrolled in home-based preschools were enrolled in 3 or 4-Star rated preschools. The distribution of students by quality rating and provider type is shown below in Table 3.

Table 3

Number of DPP Students by Provider Type and Qualistar Rating in 2010 (Student Count & Percent in Specified Rating)										
Star Rating	DPS		Community Center-Based		Community- Home-Based		Both*		Total*	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1-Star	0	0.0%	43	2.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	43	0.7%
2-Star	219	6.0%	272	12.6%	3	6.5%	10	19.2%	504	8.5%
3-Star	2,606	71.2%	1,000	46.2%	12	26.1%	36	69.2%	3,654	61.7%
4-Star	811	22.2%	627	29.0%	7	15.2%	6	11.5%	1,451	24.5%
In Process	0	0.0%	70	3.2%	6	13.0%	0	0.0%	76	1.3%
Intro to Quality	0	0.0%	81	3.7%	16	34.8%	0	0.0%	97	1.6%
Provisional	0	0.0%	4	0.2%	2	4.3%	0	0.0%	6	0.1%
Missing	24	0.7%	66	3.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	90	1.5%
Total	3,660	100.0%	2,163	100.0%	46	100.0%	52	100.0%	5,921	100.0%

*It is possible for a student to be enrolled in a community program for before- and/or after-school care in addition to being enrolled in a DPS provider for the majority of the school day. The totals in the table include the 52 students who were enrolled in both DPS and community sites.

An important indicator of the success of the DPP program is the growing number of students enrolled in high quality preschool programs. In 2008, 575 DPP students were enrolled in a 3 or 4-Star rated program; by 2010, 5,105 students were enrolled in 3 or 4-Star rated programs. As the number of students participating in DPP has expanded, the percentage of students enrolled in 3 and 4-Star programs has remained above 85%. Table 4 shows the comparisons of DPP students by star rating across all school years.

Table 4

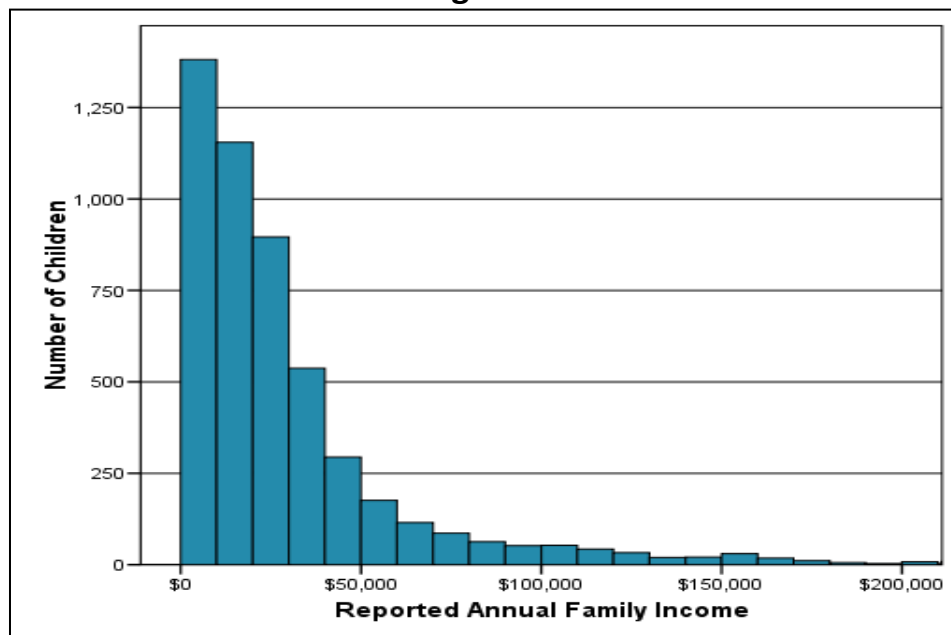
Number of DPP Students by Star Rating and by School Year						
Star Rating	2007-2008		2008-2009		2009-2010	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
1-Star	4	0.6%	62	1.2%	43	0.7%
2-Star	10	1.6%	209	4.1%	504	8.5%
3-Star	335	53.3%	3,253	64.0%	3,654	61.7%
4-Star	240	38.2%	1,092	21.5%	1,451	24.5%
Intro to Quality	0	0.0%	190	3.7%	97	1.6%
Provisional	1	0.2%	3	0.1%	6	0.1%
In Process/Missing	38	5.7%	274	3.2%	166	2.8%
Total	628	100.0%	5,083	100.0%	5,921*	100.0%

*The totals in the table include the 52 students who were enrolled in both DPS and community sites.

Family Income

In 2010, DPP continued to serve Denver's lowest income families. Nearly 58% of DPP families reported annual family incomes of less than \$30,000. Only eight percent of families reported annual household incomes of \$70,000 or higher. Figure 1 presents the distribution of children served by DPP in 2010 by annual family income.

Figure 1



Primary Home Language

Families that speak English as their primary home language represented the majority of the DPP population in 2010. Approximately 29% of the families enrolled in DPP during the 2010 school year reported speaking Spanish at home. The remaining 10% of families did not report their primary home language, speak more than one language at home, or speak a language other than English or Spanish. These percentages were similar to the percentages reported in the 2009 school year. Table 5 below details DPP 2010 enrollment by the language spoken at home.

Table 5

DPP Enrollment by Home Language in 2010		
Home Language	#	%
English	3,610	60.97%
Spanish	1,693	28.59%
Vietnamese	35	0.59%
Arabic	34	0.57%
Multi-Lingual	233	3.94%
Other Language	87	1.47%
Not Provided	229	3.87%
Total	5,921	100.00%

Race/ethnicity

The reported race/ethnicity of children enrolled in DPP is shown in Table 6. The racial/ethnic distribution of children participating in the program this year closely mirrored the distribution of the previous two years. The most notable change from 2009 to 2010 was the 581 increase in the number of children enrolled in DPP whose families reported their race/ethnicity as white. The percent of participants reporting ‘other’ race/ethnicity or **not** reporting race/ethnicity decreased by 5.53% from 2009 to 2010. Hispanic children continued to lead all other race/ethnicity groups in DPP participation; in 2010, approximately 49% of the total DPP enrollment was Hispanic. White children represented 27% of participants and black children represented 13%. Table 6 below details the race/ethnicity of children enrolled in DPP across all years of the program.

Table 6

Reported Race/Ethnicity of Children Enrolled in DPP						
Child's Ethnicity	2007-2008		2008-2009		2009-2010	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Asian	15	2.40%	149	2.90%	186	3.14%
Black	59	9.40%	658	12.90%	741	12.51%
Hispanic	344	54.80%	2,634	51.80%	2,918	49.28%
Native American	5	0.80%	56	1.10%	49	0.83%
Multi-Racial	27	4.30%	177	3.50%	301	5.08%
White	137	21.80%	1,040	20.50%	1,621	27.38%
Other/Missing/Not Provided	41	6.50%	369	7.30%	105	1.77%
Total	628	100.00%	5,083	100.00%	5,921	100.00%

Family Size

The distribution of families according to family size is presented in Table 7. The family size distribution in the program for 2010 looks similar to the distributions in 2008 and 2009.

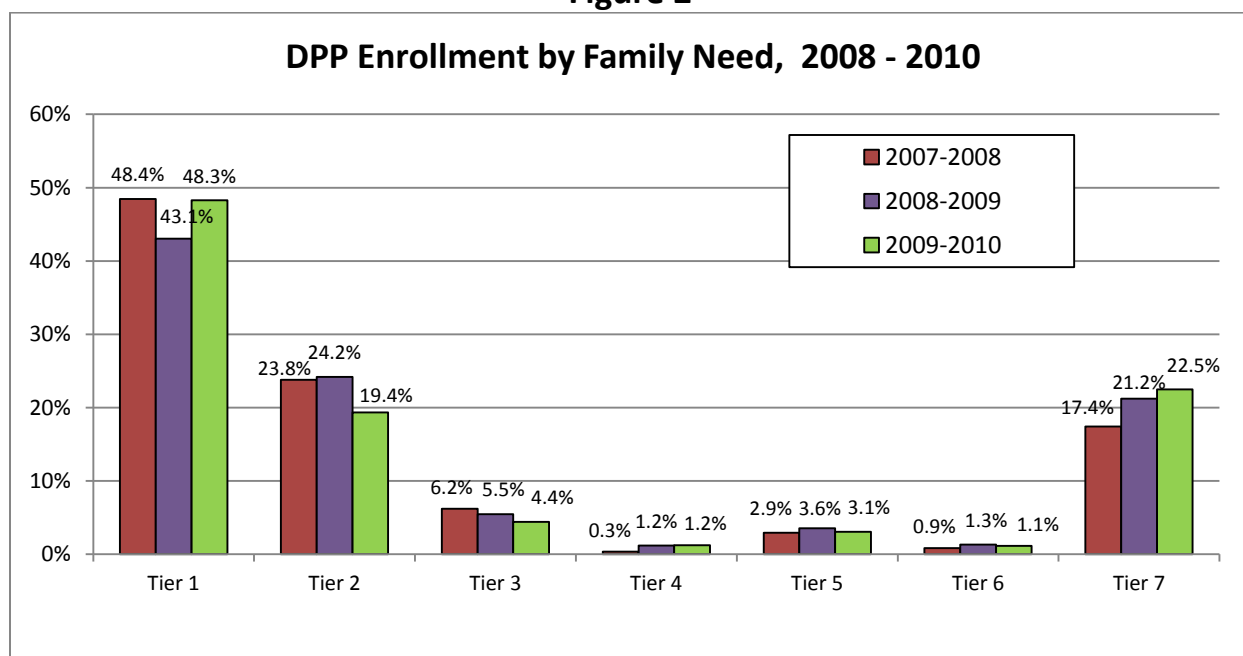
Table 7

Size of Families Enrolled in DPP in 2010		
Family Size	#	%
2 members	436	7.36%
3 members	1,137	19.20%
4 members	2,051	34.64%
5 members	1,178	19.90%
6 members	539	9.10%
7 or more members	333	5.62%
Missing/Misclassified	247	4.17%
Total	5,921	100.00%

Level of Need (Income Tier)

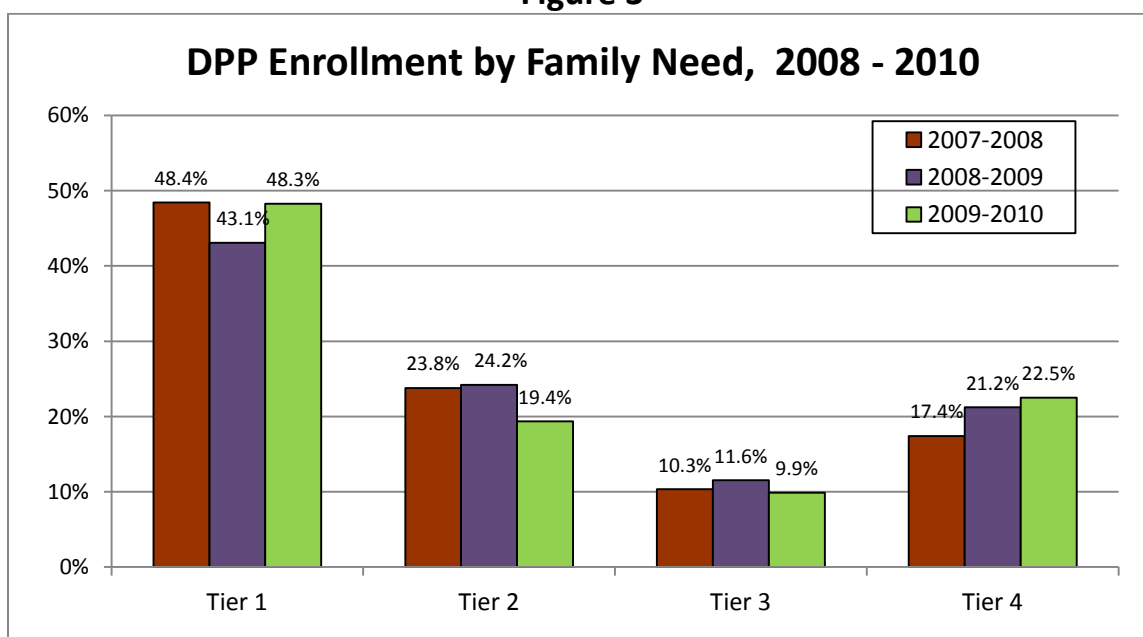
In order to estimate each family's *need* for tuition credits, DPP looks at a combination of two factors, annual family income and family size. DPP organizes the resulting income index into seven categories or tiers. Figure 2 below presents the enrollment of DPP families by family need, with tier 1 indicating the highest need and tier 7 indicating the lowest need for tuition credits. In all years of DPP operation, the greatest percentage of families enrolled in DPP fell into tier 1, families with a relatively high need for tuition credits.

Figure 2



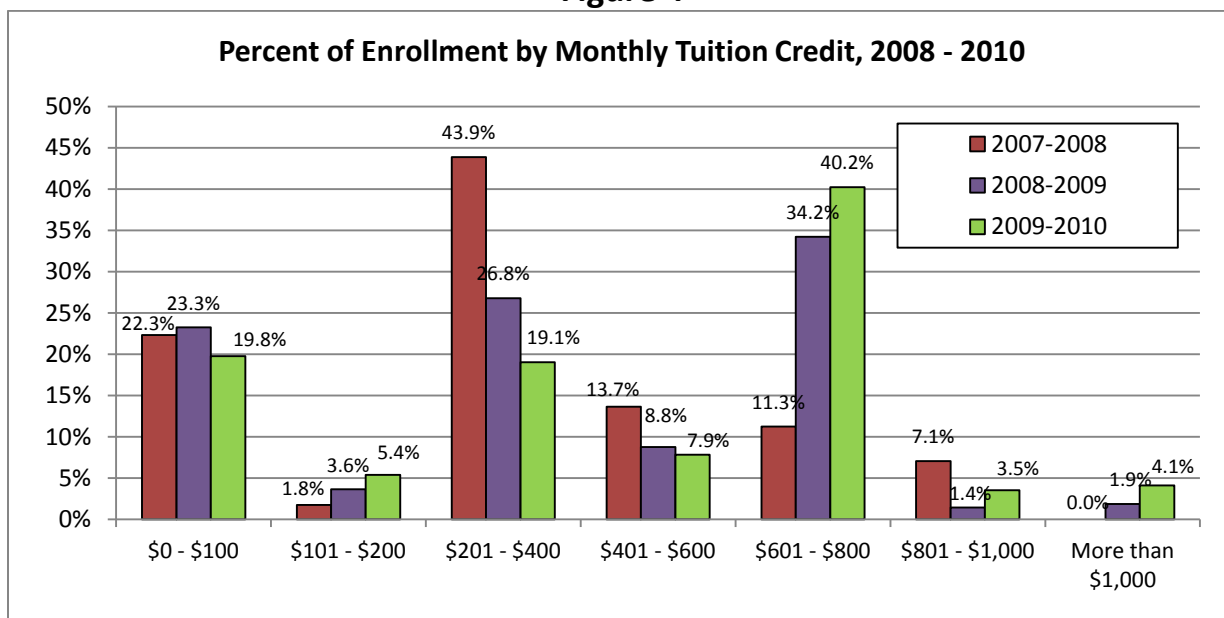
Because of the relatively small difference between tiers 3, 4, 5 and 6, the evaluators believe that it is appropriate to consolidate these tiers into a single tier 3 category for analysis purposes. The result of consolidating tiers 3, 4, 5, and 6 is presented in Figure 3 below, with original tiers 3, 4, 5 and 6 becoming the new tier 3 and the original tier 7 becoming the tier 4.

Figure 3



The calculation of a monthly tuition credit takes into account the quality of the preschool (Qualistar rating), the hours that a child attends preschool and the family need as determined by the original tier income system discussed above. Figure 4 shows the distribution of approved monthly tuition credit amounts across the past three academic years. While the percentage of families approved to receive the lowest and highest monthly credits has not varied much over these three years, the percentage of families approved to receive \$201-\$400 tuition credits has decreased and the percentage of families approved to receive \$601-\$800 tuition credits has increased during the period. This change occurred because in the last two years more families with lower incomes have participated in DPS's six hour ECE program supported by DPP.

Figure 4



Theory of Action and Evaluation Questions

Theory of Action

DPP's goal is to help children make an easier transition to kindergarten and, ultimately, to perform better academically in school. A second goal is to raise the quality of preschool programs in Denver. The underlying theory of action behind the program is summarized as follows:

- When DPP provides tuition credits to offset preschool costs for families using an effective and efficient application process, more families will have access to preschool and enroll their children in preschool, and enrolled students will attend preschool more regularly;
- When students attend high-quality preschools, they are more likely to develop the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in kindergarten and beyond;
- When DPP provides both higher levels of tuition credits to families of students that attend quality preschool programs and incentives to preschool programs to improve their quality, the quality of participating programs will increase; and
- The multiple funding sources for preschool are difficult for many parents to understand and challenging for service providers to manage. The DPP tuition credits should decrease the complexity of preschool financing for parents and service providers.

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation questions set forth in Table 8 below were developed by DPP and the evaluation team in the fall of 2007 and are designed to track the effectiveness of the theory of action for the DPP program. These questions have guided the yearly evaluation of the program and provide the structure for this evaluation report.

This year's evaluation included an analysis of all parent survey responses crossed by the following factors: child ethnicity, home language, income (four tiers described above) and provider type (DPS, center-based or home-based sites). All of the provider survey responses were also crossed by the following factors: Qualistar-rating, number of classrooms, and provider type. Only significant results are discussed in this report. Child outcomes are covered in a separate report prepared by the Clayton Early Learning Institute.

Table 8

Evaluation Questions		
Policy Issues	A. Parents/Families	1. Does the availability and size of the preschool tuition credits encourage families of eligible children to enroll in the program?
		2. Do the tuition credits influence attendance rates for children?
		3. Do families opt for higher quality programs because of the tuition credits? If not, why not?
	B. Preschool Providers	1. Did the number of rated and/or accredited programs increase as a result of the program?
		2. Did the quantity of quality-rated programs increase as a result of the program?
		3. Did the quality improvement process, including grants given by DPP for preschool providers, help improve program quality?
		4. Are other providers entering the market for preschool services?
	C. Child Outcomes	1. Did children make progress in their development while in DPP early childhood environments (i.e., language, literacy, mathematics, social-emotional development, etc.)?
		2. To what extent and in what areas are DPP students ready for Kindergarten?
		3. Does a year of quality preschool have similar impacts across income levels and/or languages?
		4. Do children receiving the tuition credit compare favorably to their demographic counterparts who did not receive tuition credits on subsequent assessments administered by Denver Public Schools?
		5. Are higher rated preschool programs associated with Kindergarten readiness and long-term academic success?
Operational Issues	D. Outreach	1. Are parents informed about DPP's existence and about how to apply for the tuition credits?
		2. Which strategies are most effective – the internet, community meetings, public service announcements or advertising?
	E. Tuition Credits	1. Does the application system facilitate family participation?
		2. Does the system deliver information and payments in a timely manner?
		3. Does the system have an acceptable error rate in terms of family application, student attendance and aid distribution?
	F. Other Funding	1. Do providers and the DPP understand the impact other funding streams have on DPP participation?
		2. Does family participation in other preschool funding streams influence parent participation in DPP?
		3. Can preschool funding be simplified for providers? For Parents?

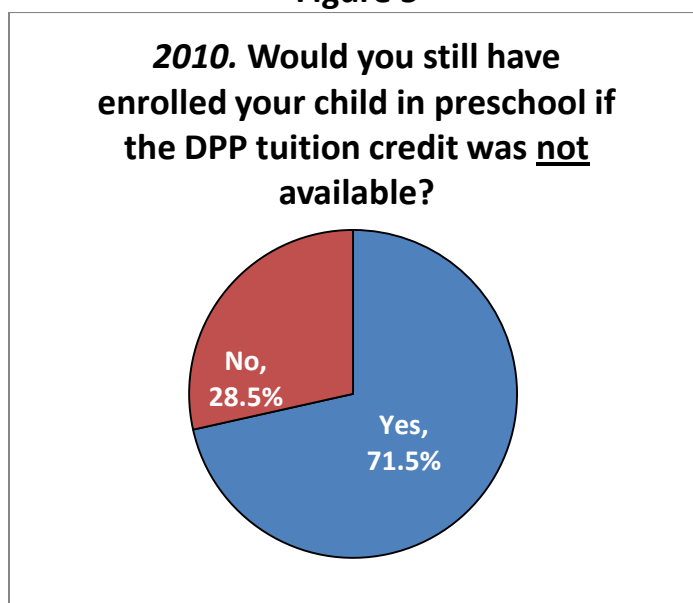
Key Evaluation Findings

This section addresses all of the evaluation questions set forth in Table 8 above in the order that they appear in the Table with one exception. The Child Outcomes questions, C1 through 5 are addressed in a separate report prepared by the Clayton Early Learning Institute. Although the evaluators collected data on all of the other questions, the amount of evidence available to address the various questions varies considerably. Results on a given evaluation question came from both parents and providers, and were further analyzed by demographic sub-categories (e.g., income tier, primary language spoken at home, type of preschool, and Qualistar Rating). Results of this additional analysis are only presented if they are noteworthy and/or useful in answering the question being addressed. When additional information can be gained from our interviews and the Spanish language parent focus group, those insights are also reported.

A1. Does the availability and size of the preschool tuition credit encourage families of eligible children to enroll in the program?

The data supports the conclusion that although the majority of parents would have enrolled their children in preschool without the existence of the DPP tuition credits, the credits had a positive influence on the enrollment decisions of a significant number of parents. When parents were asked if they would have enrolled their child in preschool if the DPP tuition credit was **not** available, 28.5% of parents reported that they would not have enrolled their child (Figure 5). This suggests that 28.5% of DPP parents enrolled their child in preschool as a result of DPP. This percent represents a slight decrease from 2009, when 32.2% of parents reported that they would not have enrolled their child in preschool without a DPP tuition credit.

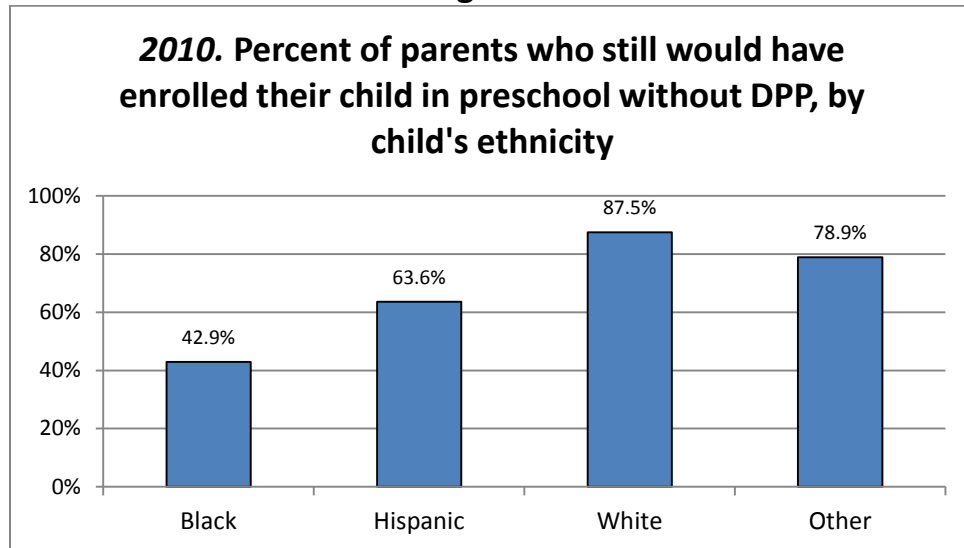
Figure 5



By Race/Ethnicity

The data suggests that the availability of the DPP tuition credit was more likely to influence the enrollment decisions of black and Hispanic parents, than of white parents (Figure 6).

Figure 6

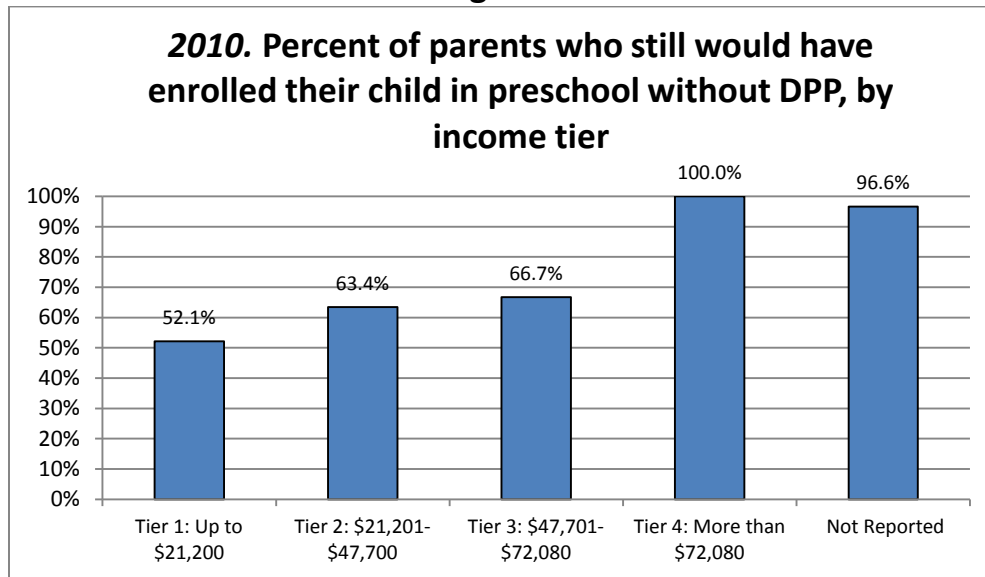


On this question the 2010 data showed significant changes from the 2009 data. From 2009 to 2010, the percentage of black parents who reported that they still would have enrolled their child without the DPP tuition credit dropped from 65.4% to 42.9%; and the percentage of parents with Hispanic children who reported that they still would have enrolled without the DPP tuition credit increased from 53.8% to 63.6%.

By Income

Income level was also related to enrollment decisions. As the income level of parents increased, they were more likely to have enrolled their children in preschool with or without the DPP tuition credit. Figure 7 shows that in the lower income tiers the DPP tuition credit had a significant impact on parental decisions regarding preschool enrollment.

Figure 7



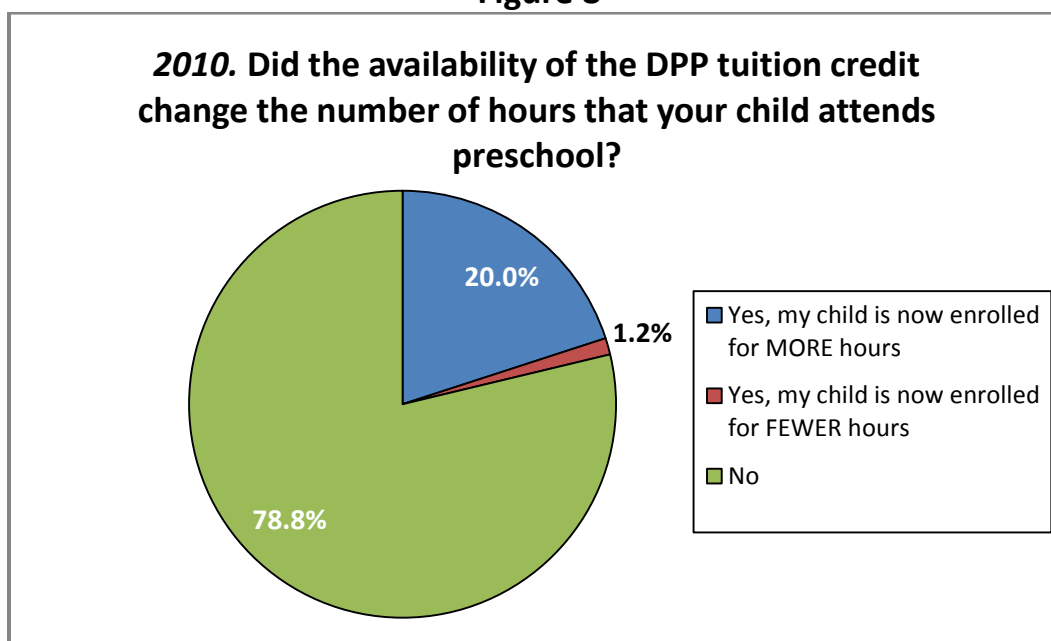
Between 2009 and 2010, the percentages of parents reporting they would have enrolled in preschool without DPP increased slightly for the lowest two income tiers and increased 17.2% for those not reporting income.

A2. Do the tuition credits influence attendance and completion rates for students?

The evaluators concluded that the DPP tuition credits did influence student attendance rates. As discussed below, there is survey data to suggest that the tuition credits helped parents keep their children continuously enrolled in preschool, thus increasing the likelihood of completion.

Figure 8 shows that exactly one-fifth of parents reported that the DPP tuition credit allowed them to increase the number of hours that their child attended preschool.

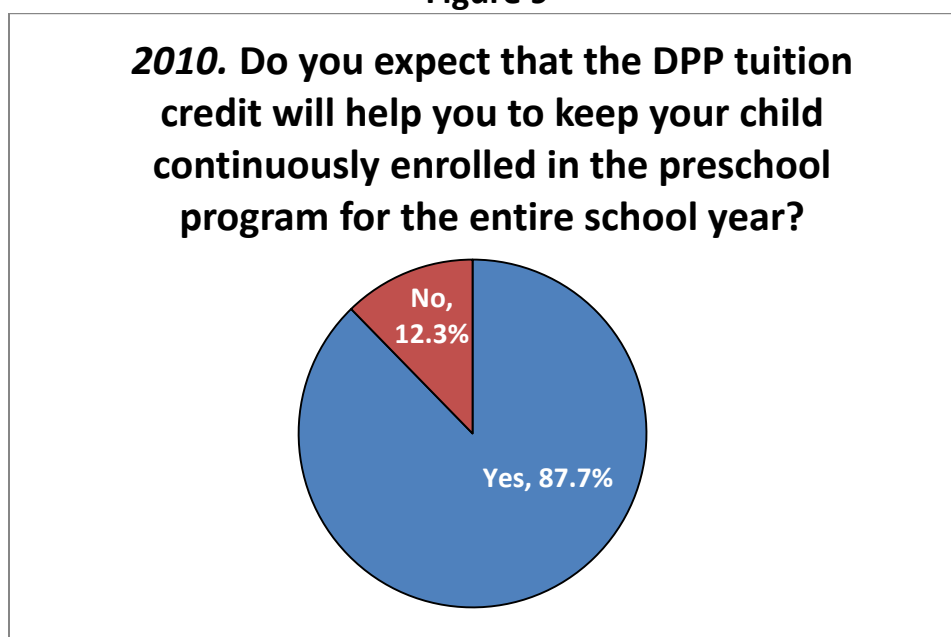
Figure 8



Survey comments from parents who indicated that the DPP tuition credit increased their child's enrollment hours also suggested that the tuition credit made preschool more affordable and thus allowed parents to increase hours of enrollment.

As shown in Figure 9, the vast majority of parents expected that the DPP tuition credit would help them to keep their children continuously enrolled in preschool for the entire school year.

Figure 9

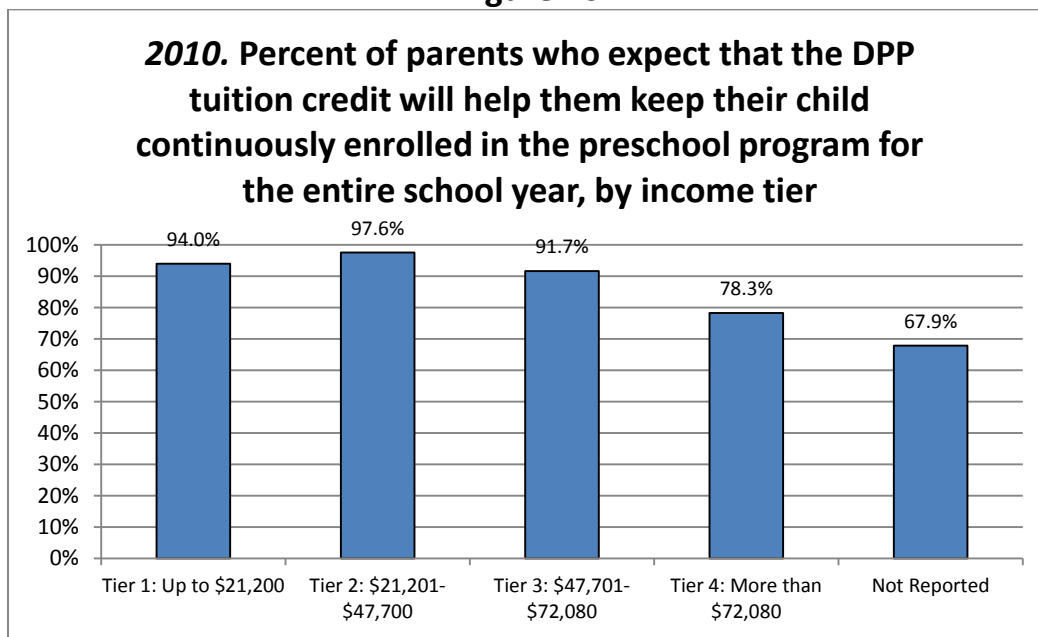


In 2009, surveyed parents were asked whether the DPP tuition credit helped their child stay continuously enrolled in preschool. The 2010 survey further defined *continuous enrollment* as the entire year and asked parents to project whether the tuition credit would help them keep their child continuously enrolled. From 2009 to 2010, the percent of parents answering ‘yes’ to this line of questioning increased from 68.5% to 87.7%. Though this increase might be due in part to the refinement of the question in 2010, it appears that the DPP tuition credits were helpful to parents in maintaining continuous preschool enrollment.

By Income

As shown in Figure 10, as family income level increased the likelihood that the DPP tuition credit would help parents keep their children enrolled in preschool decreased. The availability of the tuition credit seems to be less of a factor at the upper income levels because parents may be able to keep their child enrolled in preschool without the tuition credit. The 2010 pattern was similar to the 2009 pattern.

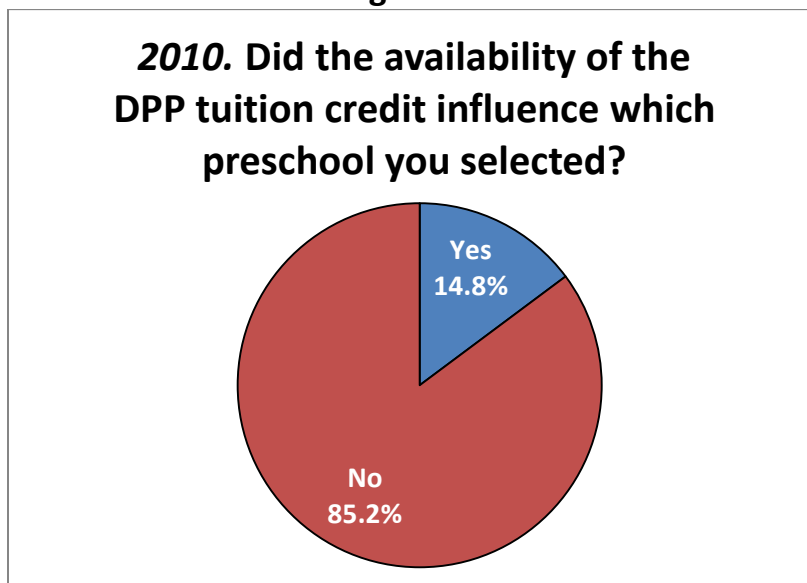
Figure 10



A3. Do families opt for higher quality programs because of the tuition credits? If not, why not?

Most families (85.2%) did not consider the DPP tuition credits when making decisions about where to enroll their child in preschool (Figure 11).

Figure 11



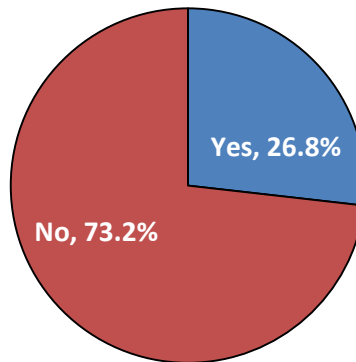
The information collected from the parent surveys suggests that cost was not the most important consideration. The 85.2% of parents who did not consider the tuition credit in their decision about where to enroll their child is a 12.2% increase from 2009. Perhaps because most Denver preschool centers are now enrolled in DPP and offer DPP tuition credits, the tuition credit is less of a factor.

Survey responses from those who reported that the tuition credit did influence their decisions often reported that they already liked a particular preschool and that the tuition credit allowed them to enroll or maintain enrollment in that preschool.

Among parents who would not have enrolled their child in preschool without DPP, the percentage of parents who were influenced by the DPP tuition credits is somewhat higher at 26.8% (Figure 12). A larger proportion of these parents might have been aware of the tuition credit prior to enrolling.

Figure 12

**2010. Did the availability of the DPP tuition credit influence which preschool you selected?
(Among those who would not have enrolled without DPP)**

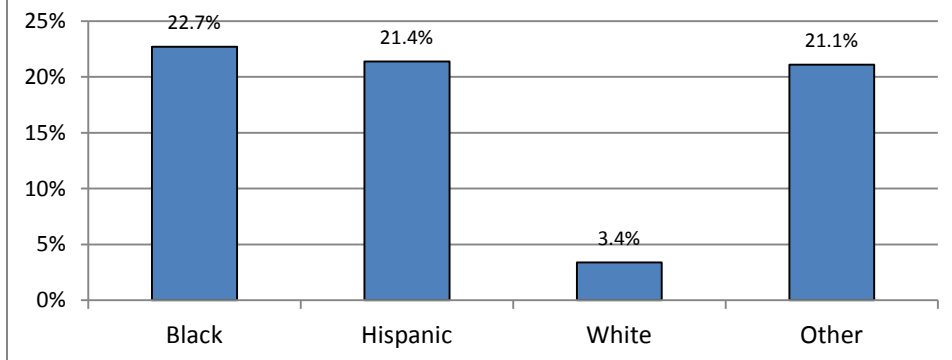


Differences by Race/Ethnicity

Figure 13 shows the race/ethnicity of the families that indicated the tuition credit **did** influence which preschool they selected. It indicates that parents of white children were much less likely than parents of children of other ethnicities to report that the DPP tuition credits influenced which preschool they selected. While over 20% of Black and Hispanic parents reported that DPP influenced their choice of preschool, only 3.4% of white parents reported that it was a factor.

Figure 13

2010. Percent of parents reporting that DPP influenced their choice of preschool, by child's ethnicity



How Do Parents Select a Preschool?

In order to evaluate how parents select a preschool, the survey asked parents a series of questions about how they made preschool enrollment decisions and also asked preschools to give their impression of how parents made these decisions. On the parent survey, parents were asked to identify the reasons for enrolling their child in a particular preschool. On the provider survey, preschools were asked for their perceptions of the most important factors that parents consider during the preschool selection process.

The 2009 version of this question included nine factors and asked respondents in both the parent and provider surveys to select their top four factors. The 2010 version included seven factors and asked respondents to select their top two. There were two reasons for this change. First, the evaluation team believed that the two options removed, Qualistar rating and personal recommendations, might be synonymous with another factor, reputation of quality. In addition, the team thought that it would be more instructive to ask a specific question about how parents determine a preschool's reputation for quality. In the 2010 survey, an additional question asked this precise question. Table 9 is a comparison of the response options provided in the 2009 survey and in the 2010 survey.

Table 9

Comparison of Reasons for Enrolling in a Particular Preschool, by Year		
Factor	Included in 2009	Included in 2010
Convenient location	Yes	Yes
Cost of tuition	Yes	Yes
Reputation of quality	Yes	Yes
Hours of operation/schedule	Yes	Yes
Qualistar rating	Yes	No
Personal recommendation(s)	Yes	No
Particular curriculum	Yes	Yes
Impression during site visit	Yes	Yes
Other	Yes	Yes

Parental Survey Results

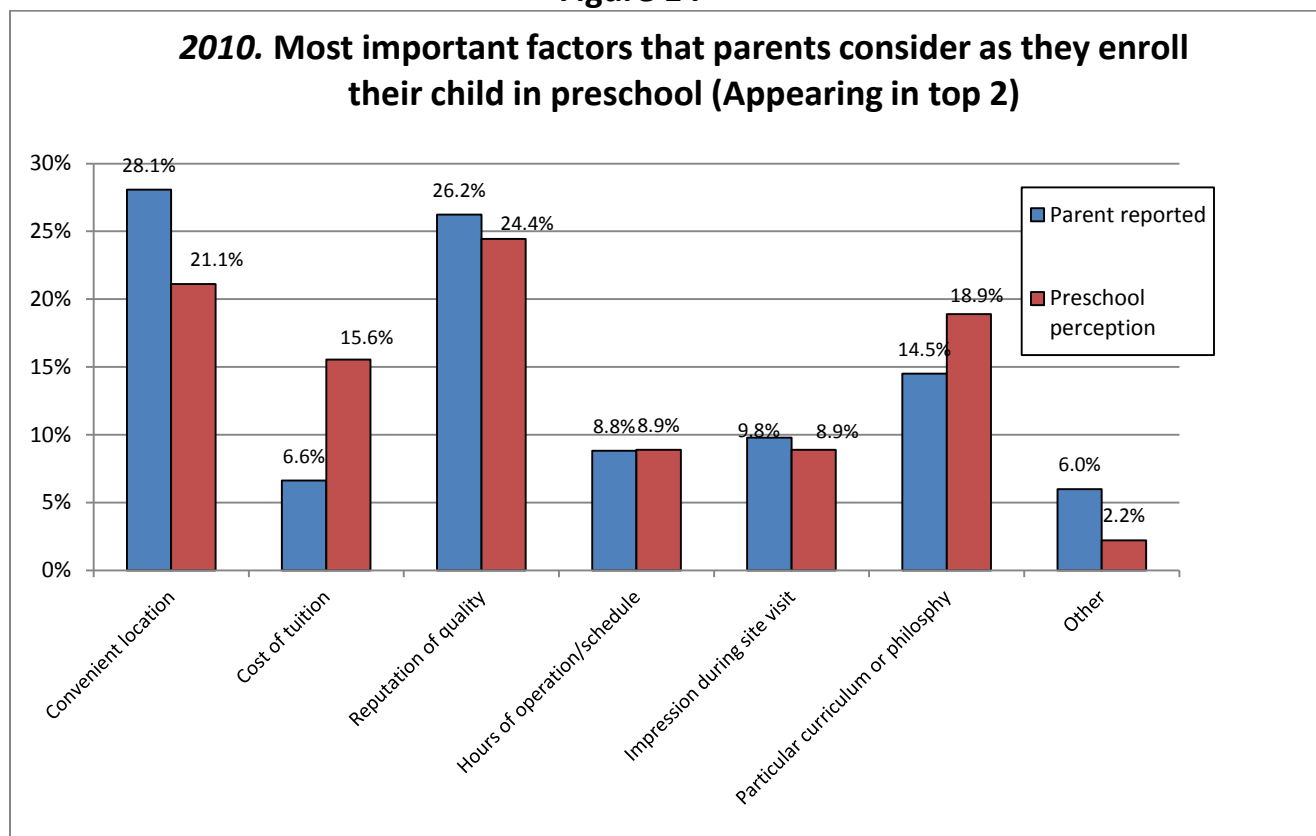
The 2010 parent survey results suggest that two factors, convenient location and reputation of quality, were more important to parents than any others. They received 28.1% and 26.2% of all the parent responses, respectively. The particular curriculum or philosophy offered by a preschool was another relatively important factor, receiving 14.5% of parent selections. Among parents, cost of tuition and “other” were the factors least likely to be considered in the selection of a preschool.

These results differed from 2009. Though fewer response options and the directive to select only two factors instead of four provide part of the explanation for this difference, it also appears that removing Qualistar rating and personal recommendation(s) as options reduced the choices that were related to reputation of quality in 2009. Analysis of the additional question on reputation of quality supports this conclusion.

Provider Survey Results

Preschools were relatively accurate in their perceptions of what factors parents consider. Preschool respondents were most likely to believe that parents consider reputation of quality, convenient location, curriculum/philosophy and cost of tuition, in that order. Preschools were also more likely than parents to select cost of tuition as a factor and less likely to select convenient location as a factor. These results for parent and preschool respondents are presented in Figure 14 below.

Figure 14



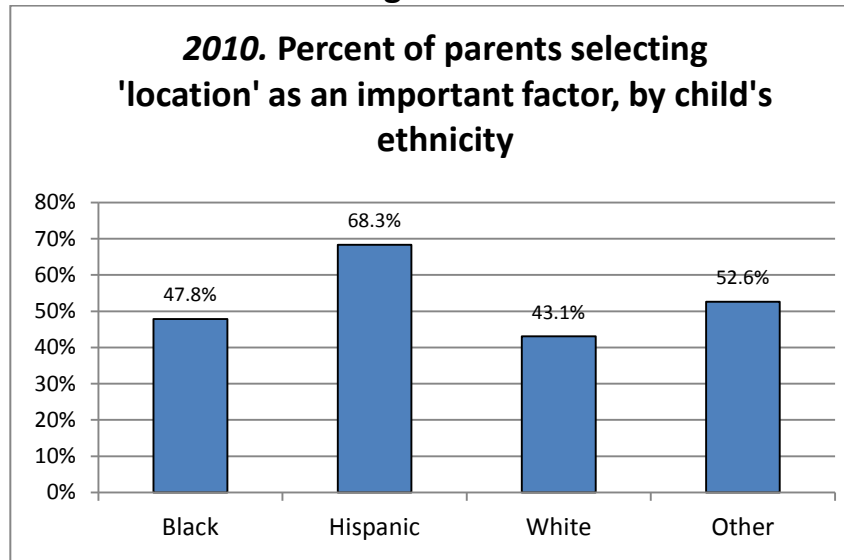
Further Analysis of Parental Surveys

Further analysis of the parent data reveals a number of differences in responses based on the ethnicity, home language, and family income of the child and the star rating and provider type of the preschool.

By Race/Ethnicity

Parents of Hispanic children were much more likely to report that convenient location was an important factor in selecting a preschool than parents with children who belong to other ethnic groups (Figure 15).

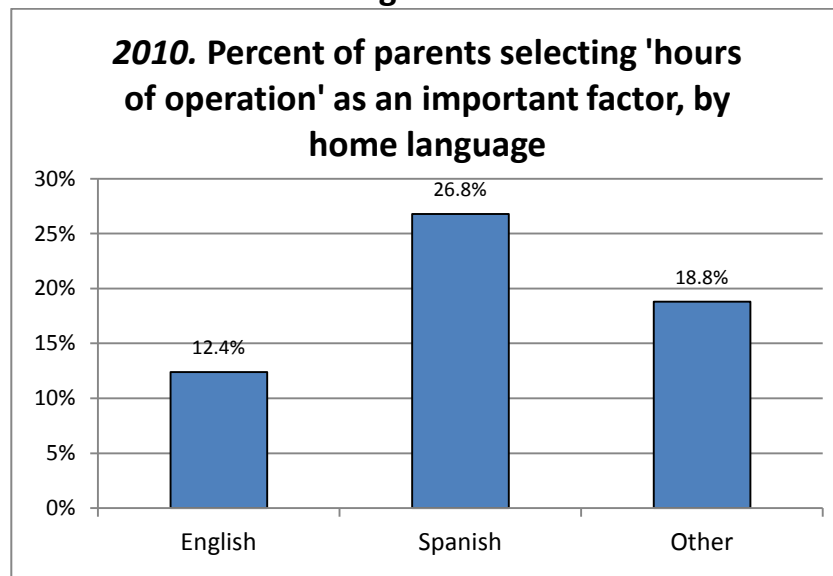
Figure 15



By Primary Language

Parents who resided in homes where the primary language is Spanish were more likely to identify hours of operation or schedule as an important factor in preschool selection than those who resided in homes where English or another language is the primary (Figure 16).

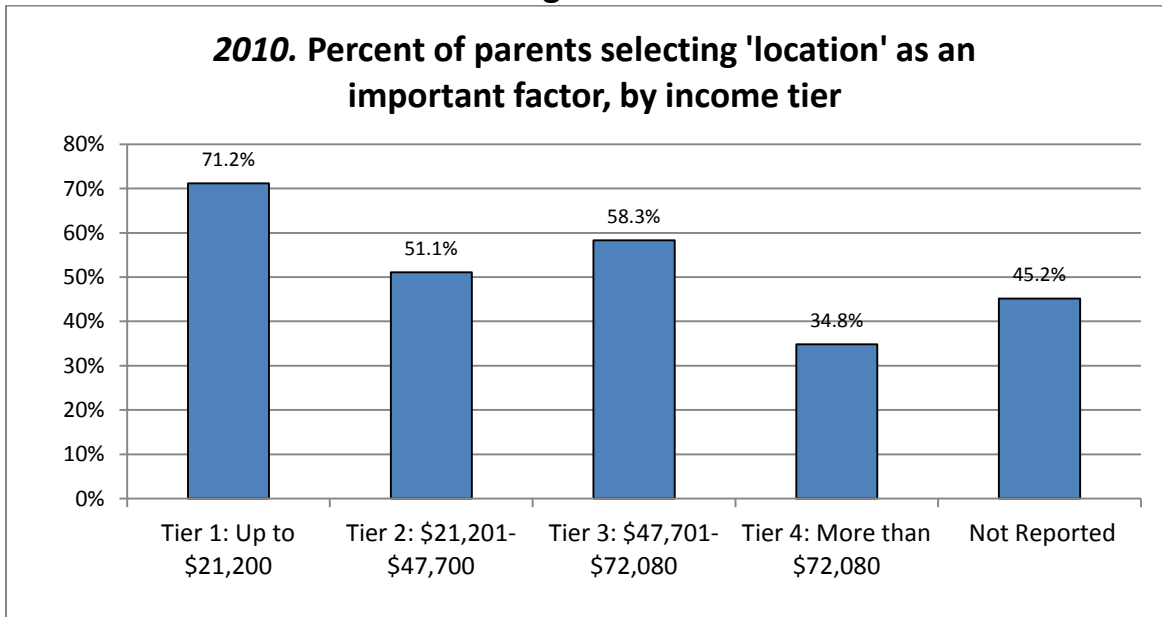
Figure 16



By Income

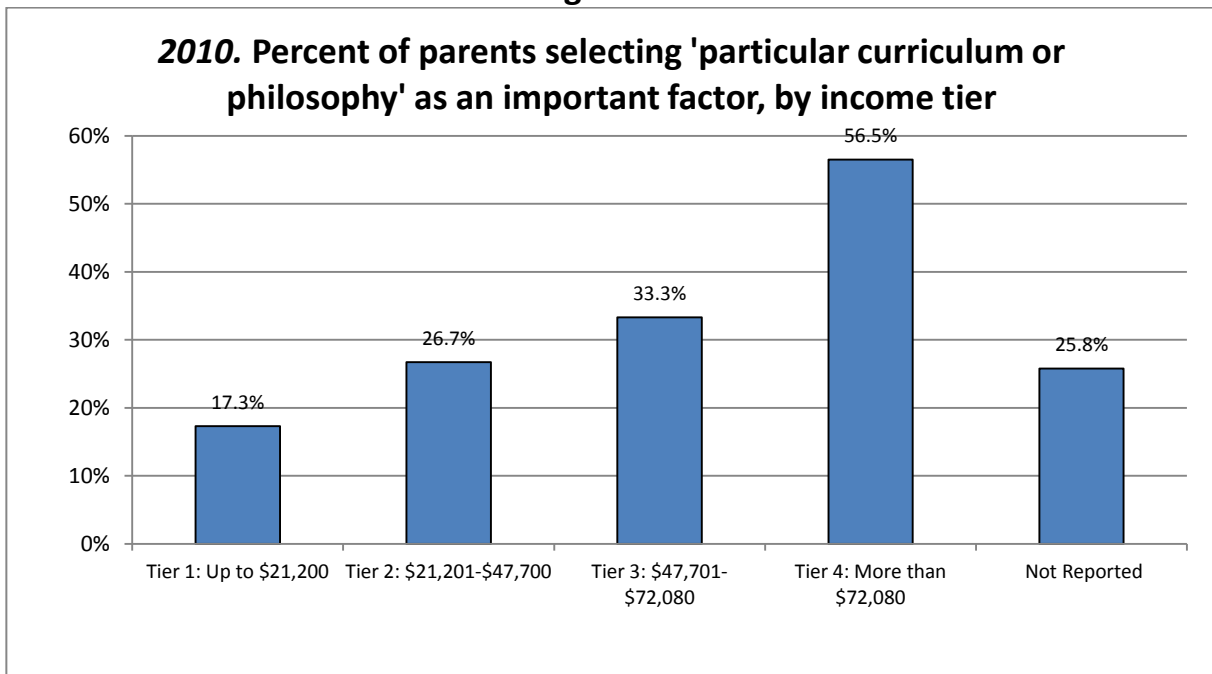
Convenient location was a factor that was more likely to be considered by parents in the lowest income tier and less likely to be considered by parents in the highest income tier (Figure 17).

Figure 17



Also as income levels increased, families were more likely to identify a particular curriculum or philosophy as an important consideration when choosing a preschool (Figure 18).

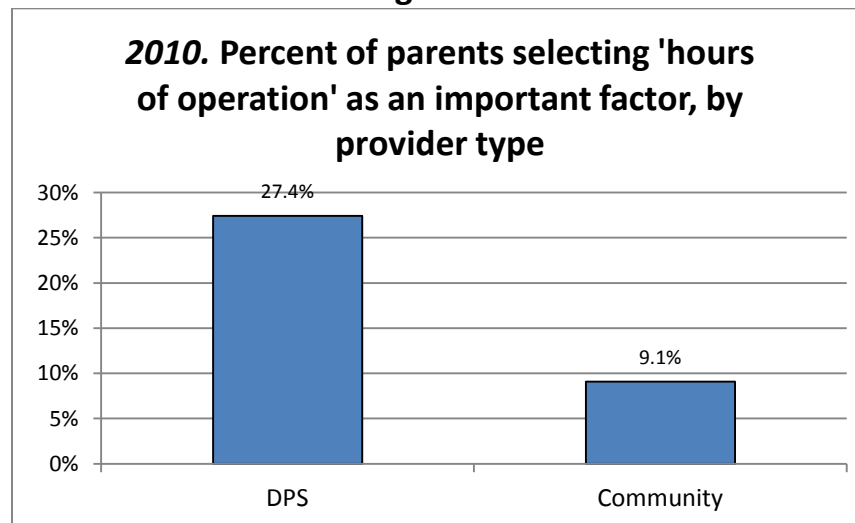
Figure 18



By Preschool Provider - DPS or Community

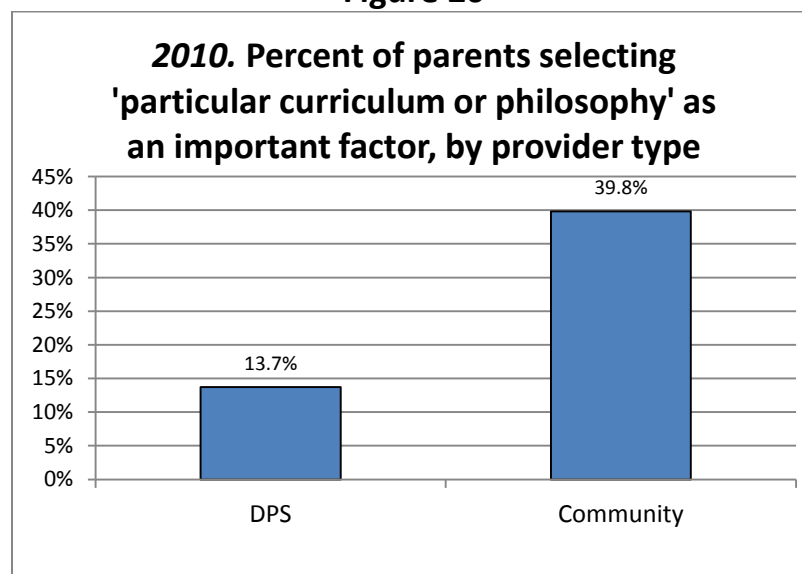
Parents whose children were enrolled in DPS preschools were more likely than parents with children enrolled in community preschools to select hours of operation/schedule as a factor in their preschool decisions (Figure 19).

Figure 19



DPS parents were less likely than community parents to select particular curriculum or philosophy as an important factor (Figure 20).

Figure 20

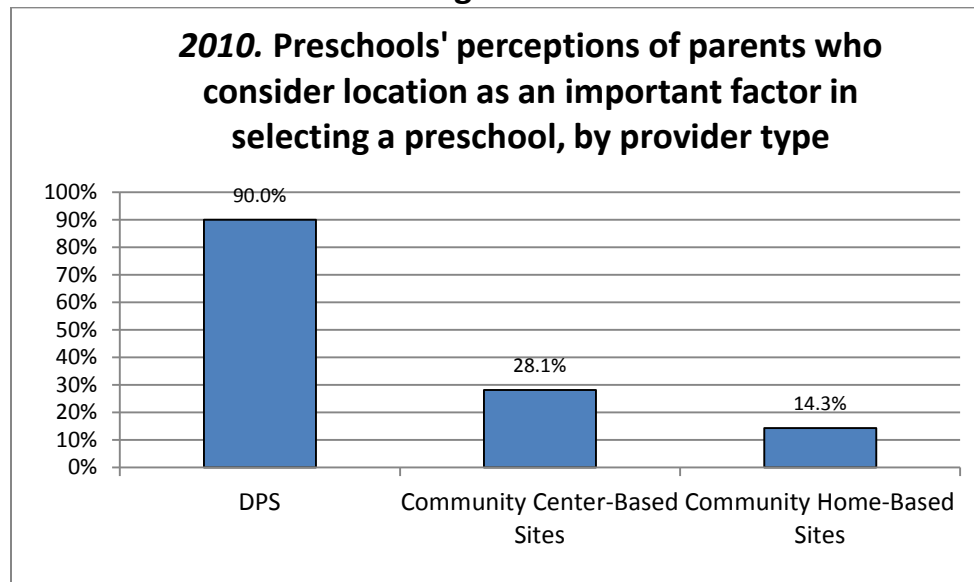


Further Analysis of Provider Surveys

Location

On the provider surveys, DPS preschools were much more likely than center-based or home-based preschool sites to indicate that parents considered convenient location as an important factor in preschool enrollment (Figure 21).

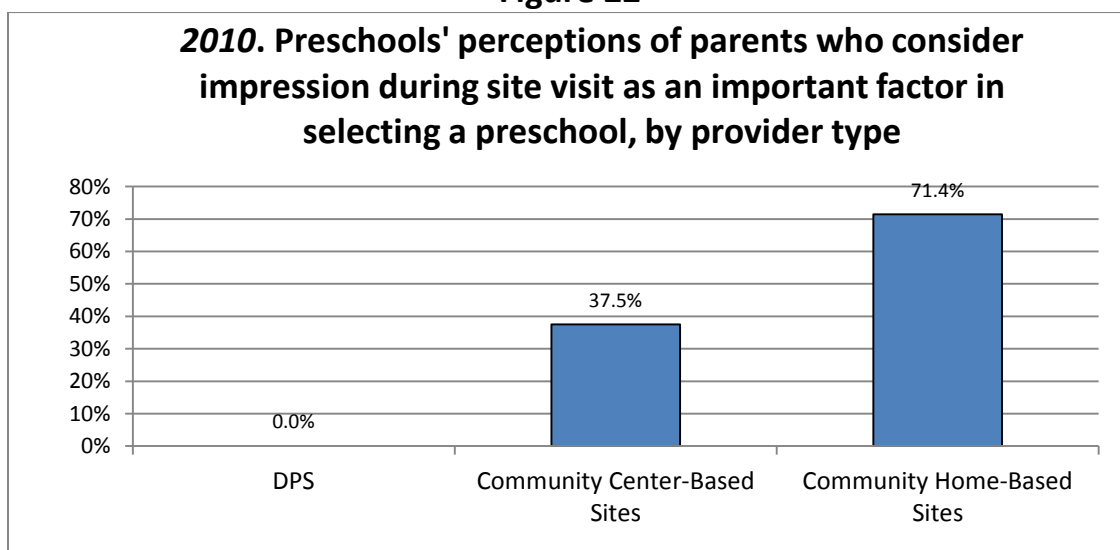
Figure 21



Impression during Site Visit

None of the DPS preschool respondents selected 'impression during site visit' as an important factor considered by parents. In contrast, a significant majority (71.4%) of home-based preschool providers indicated that impression during site visit was an important factor in parental choice (Figure 22).

Figure 22



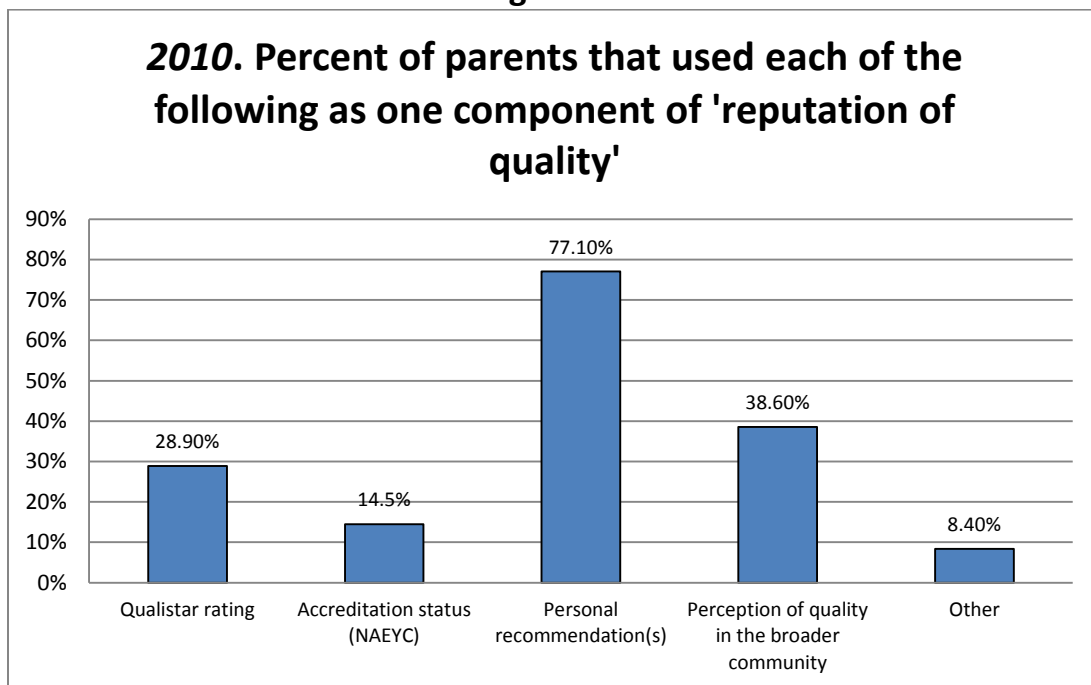
How Do Parents Determine the 'Reputation of Quality' of a Preschool?

To further investigate how parents determine preschool quality, both the parent and provider surveys asked about the factors that comprise a preschool's reputation of quality. Parents were asked to select or identify all of the factors that they used to determine a preschool's reputation of quality and preschools were asked how they believe parents determine a preschool's reputation of quality.

Personal Recommendations

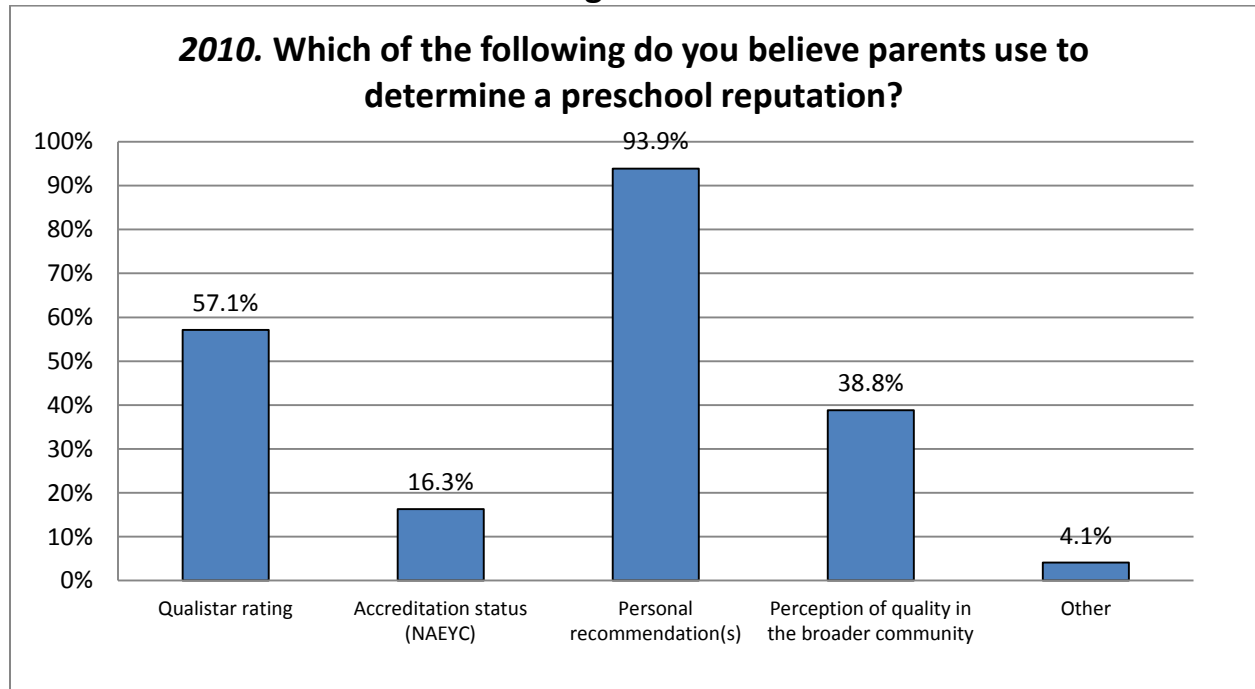
More than three-quarters of parents selected personal recommendation(s) as at least one major component of their reputation of quality determination (Figure 23).

Figure 23



Nearly all of the preschool leaders responded that parents use personal recommendation(s) to determine preschool reputation (Figure 24).

Figure 24



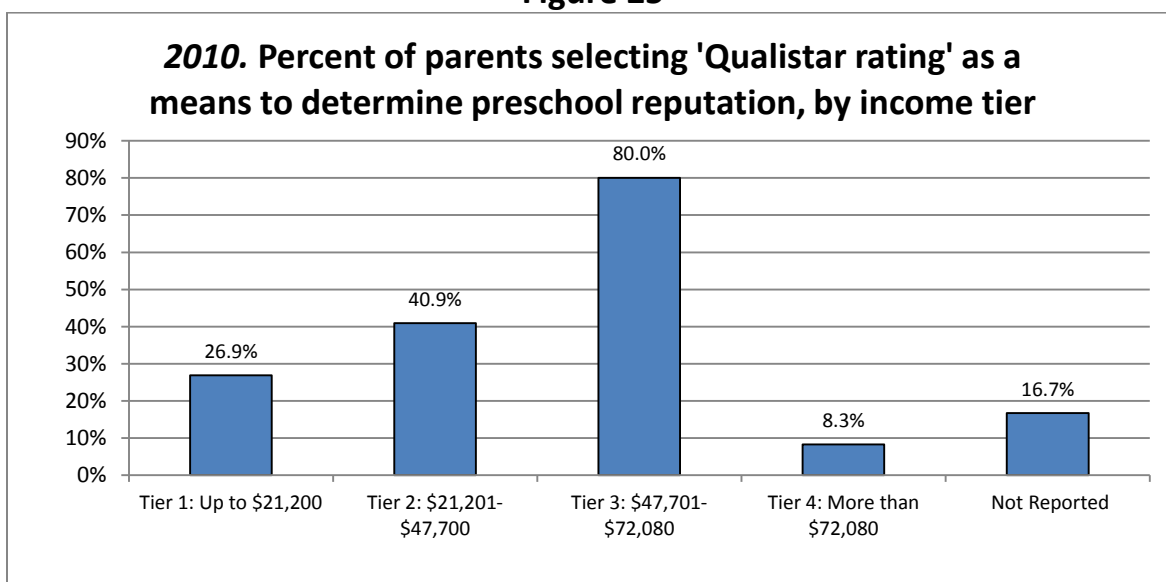
Qualistar Rating

Less than a third of parents selected Qualistar rating as a component of reputation of quality (Figure 23). This result suggests that there is a need to publicize the basis and use of Qualistar ratings as an indicator of quality preschools.

Preschool providers were much more likely to believe that parents use Qualistar rating as one component of preschool reputation than parents actually report (Figure 24). Fifty-seven percent of providers selected Qualistar Rating as a factor in parental decision making while only 29% of parents indicated that they considered it as a factor in determining the reputation of quality of a preschool.

Parents in the third income tier were much more likely than parents in any other income tier to report using Qualistar rating as a component of preschool reputation of quality (Figure 25).

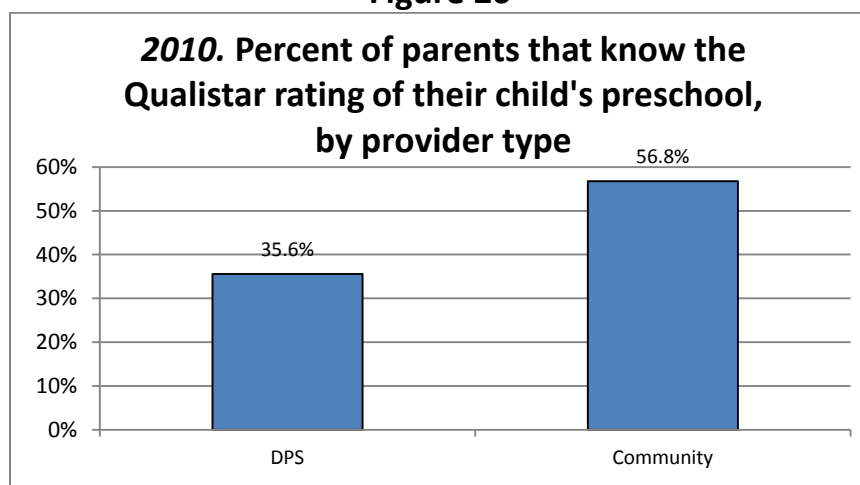
Figure 25



When parents were asked in the survey if they knew the Qualistar rating of the preschool where their child was enrolled, only slightly more than half, 52.1%, of parents reported knowing it. More than three quarters of parents, 78.9%, responding to the survey did not know whether the preschool was NAEYC accredited.

Of those responding to the parent survey, those whose children attend preschools that have a Qualistar rating were much more likely than parents whose children attend an unrated preschool to know the preschool's Qualistar rating; the comparison was 50% to 60% for parents with children at Qualistar rated preschools versus 20.7% for parents with children at unrated preschools. Also parents who had children attending community preschools were more likely than parents with children at DPS preschools to know the Qualistar rating of their child's preschool (Figure 26).

Figure 26

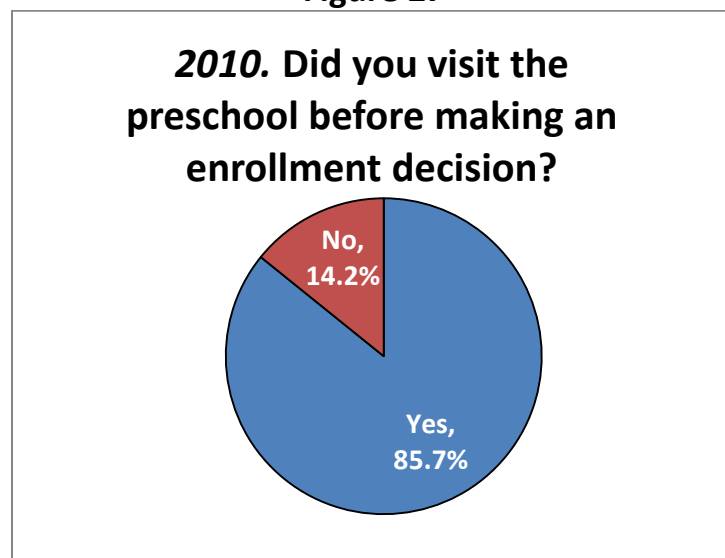


Finally, those parents who enroll their children in extended-day preschool programs were more likely than parents who enroll their children in half-day or full-day programs to know the Qualistar rating of their preschool; the comparison was 77.8% for parents with children in extended day preschool programs versus 41.9% for parents with children in half-day programs and 45.1% for parents with children in full-day programs.

Site Visits

Another important way for parents to assess preschool quality is through site visits. The vast majority, 85.7%, of parents reported visiting the preschool where they enrolled their child before making an enrollment decision (Figure 27).

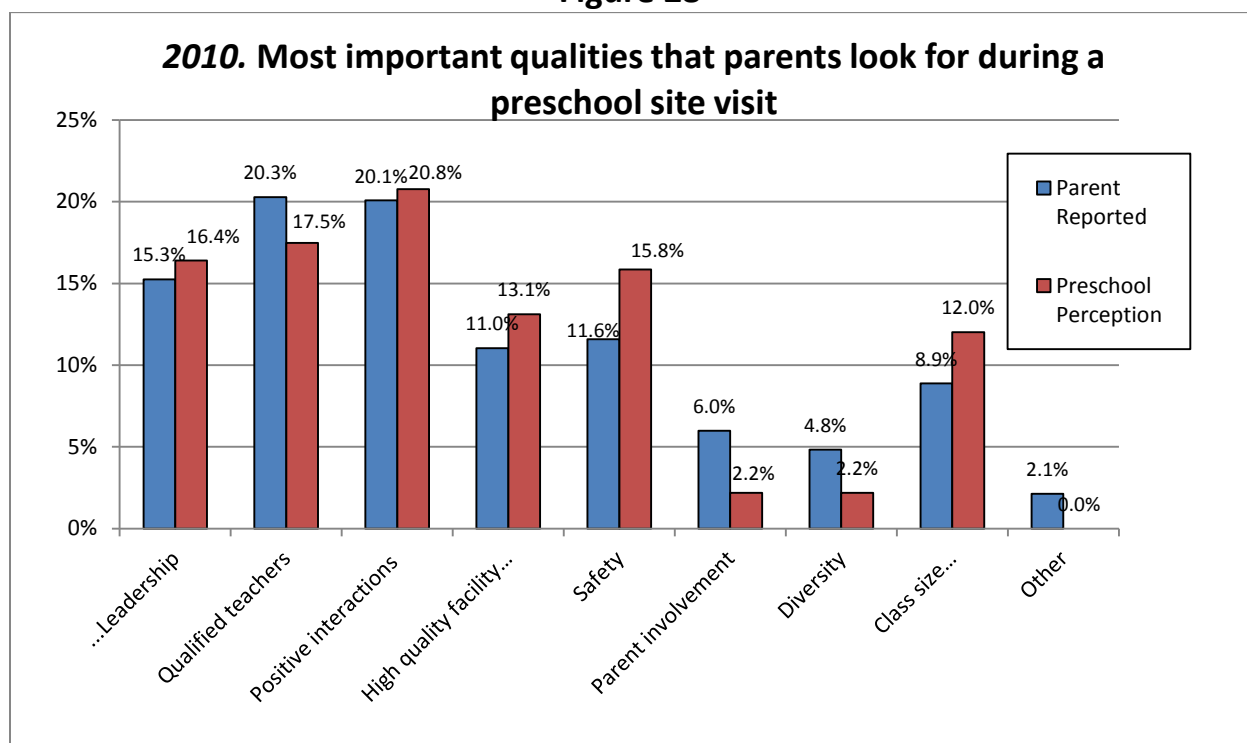
Figure 27



If a parent had made a pre-enrollment site visit, the survey then asked the parent to identify the four most important qualities that they looked for during the visit (Figure 28). The three most common qualities that parents looked for while on a visit were qualified teachers, positive interactions between students and teachers, and friendly and knowledgeable leadership. The next most common factors that they looked for were safety, a high-quality facility, the quality of the materials and equipment, and class size/student-teacher ratio.

When preschools were asked about their perception of what qualities they thought parents looked for during site visits, there were no notable differences between the providers' perceptions and parents' reports (Figure 28). Preschool providers appeared to have a good understanding of what preschool qualities parents were looking for during a pre-enrollment visit. Neither parents nor providers were likely to select parental involvement or diversity as the most important qualities.

Figure 28



The 2010 results were nearly identical to the results in 2009.

By Demographic Category

Finally, there were a number of differences in responses by demographic factors, including child's gender, ethnicity, home language, income tier, and attendance status.

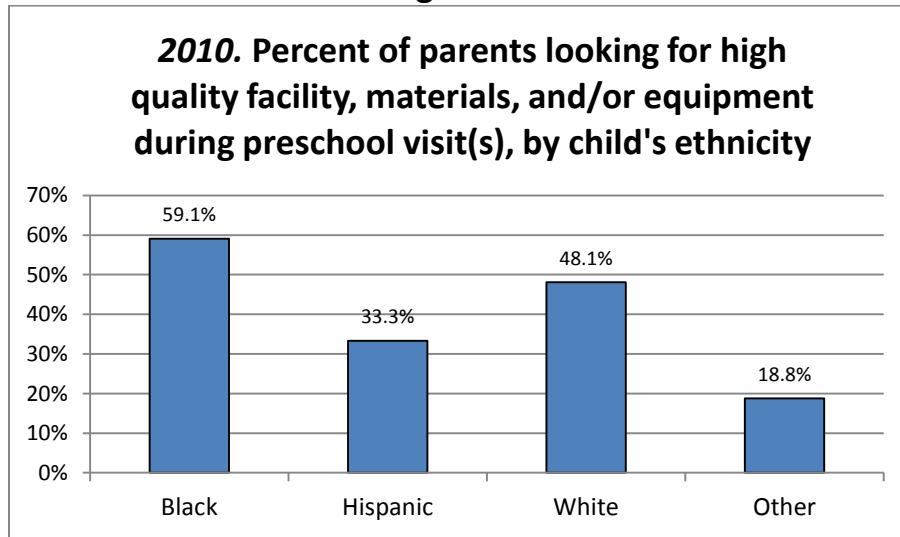
By Gender

Parents of female children were more likely to make a site visit than parents of male children, 93.0% versus 77.6%. However, parents with male children were more likely than those with female children to report looking for qualified teachers during a site visit, 84.7% versus 69.6%.

By Race/Ethnicity

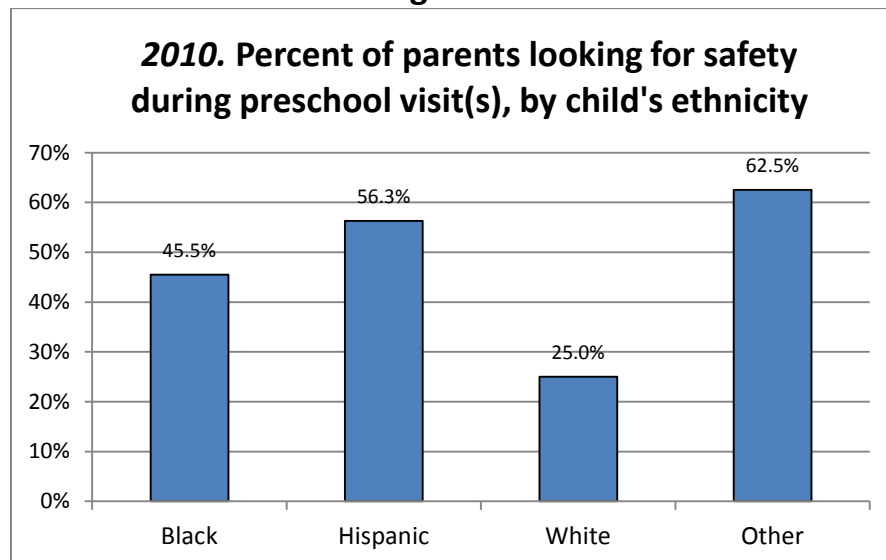
Parents of black students were the most likely to look for a high quality facility, materials and /or equipment on a visit (Figure 29).

Figure 29



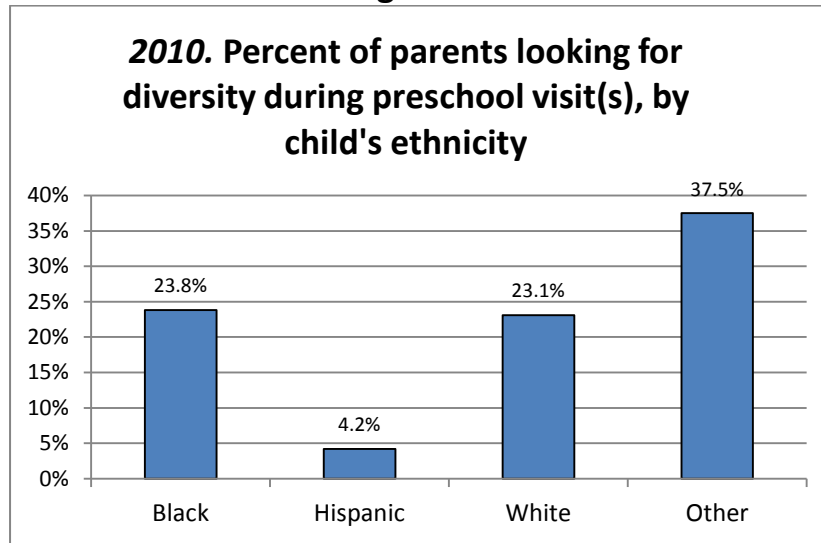
Parents of white students were much less likely than parents of students from any other racial group to cite safety as one of the most important qualities they looked for during a preschool site visit (Figure 30).

Figure 30



Parents of Hispanic students were far less likely than parents of students from other ethnic or racial groups to look for diversity during preschool site visits (Figure 31).

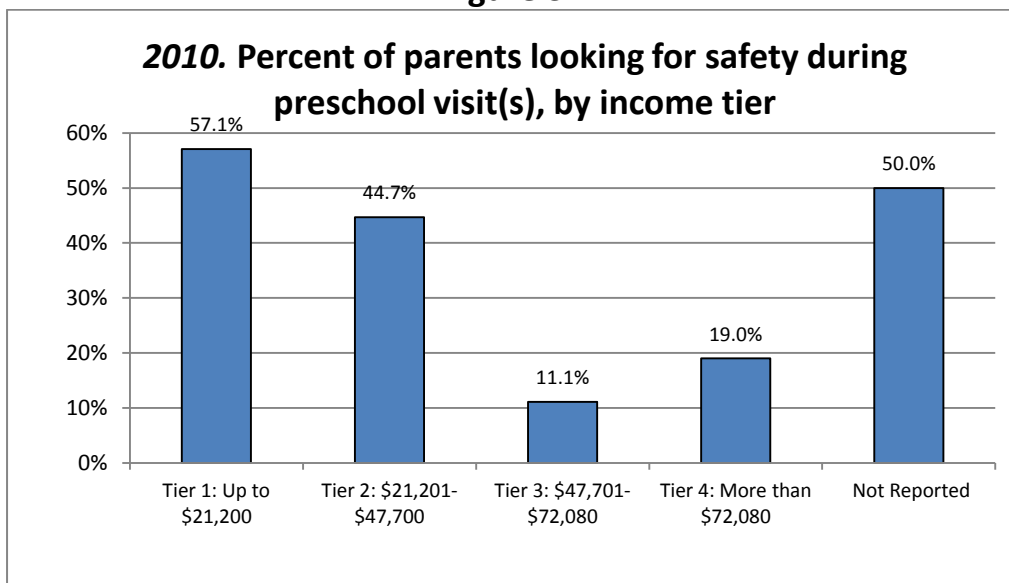
Figure 31



By Income

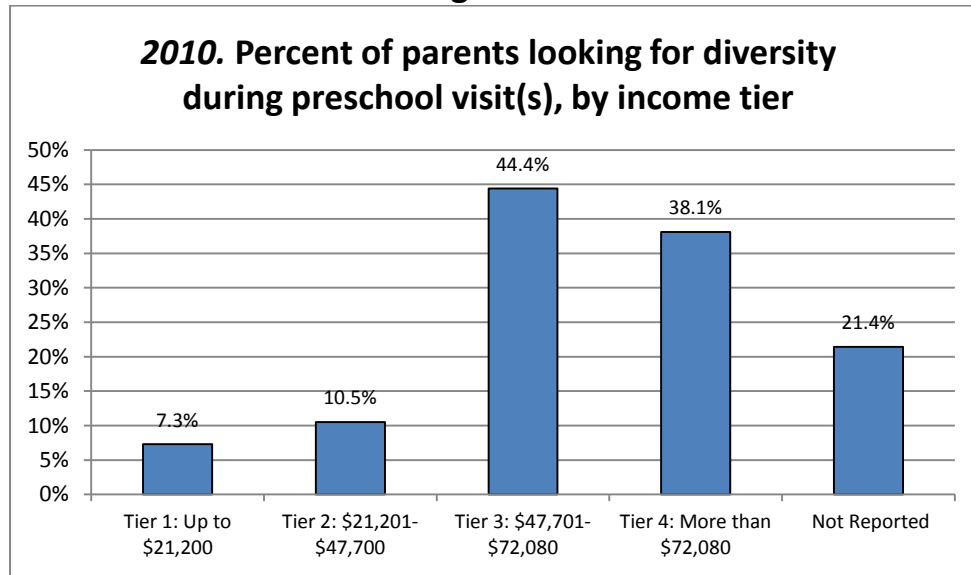
Parents from the lower income tiers were more likely to select safety as an important preschool quality during a site visit than parents from the upper income tiers (Figure 32).

Figure 32



Parents from families with higher incomes were more likely to cite diversity as an important factor than those from low income families (Figure 33).

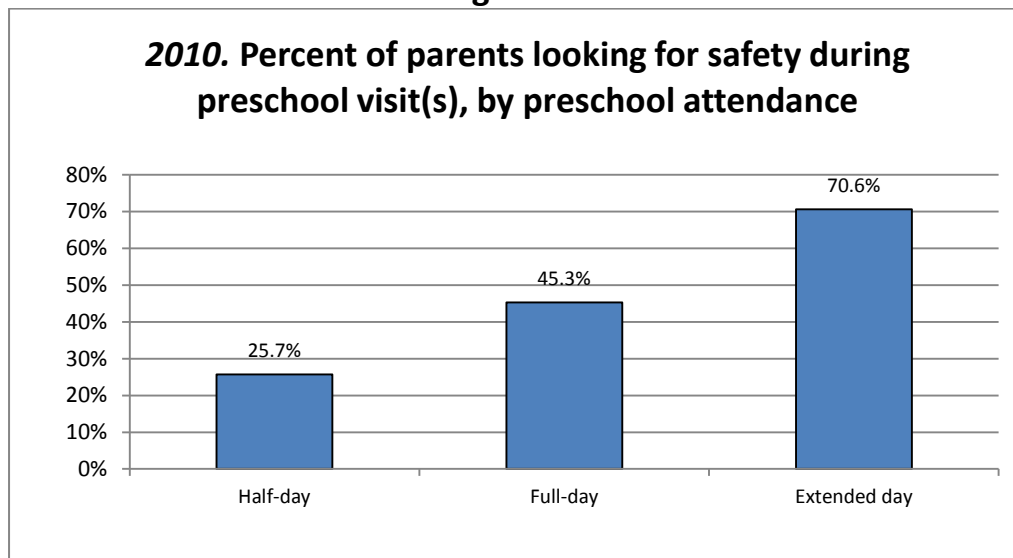
Figure 33



By Type of Preschool Program

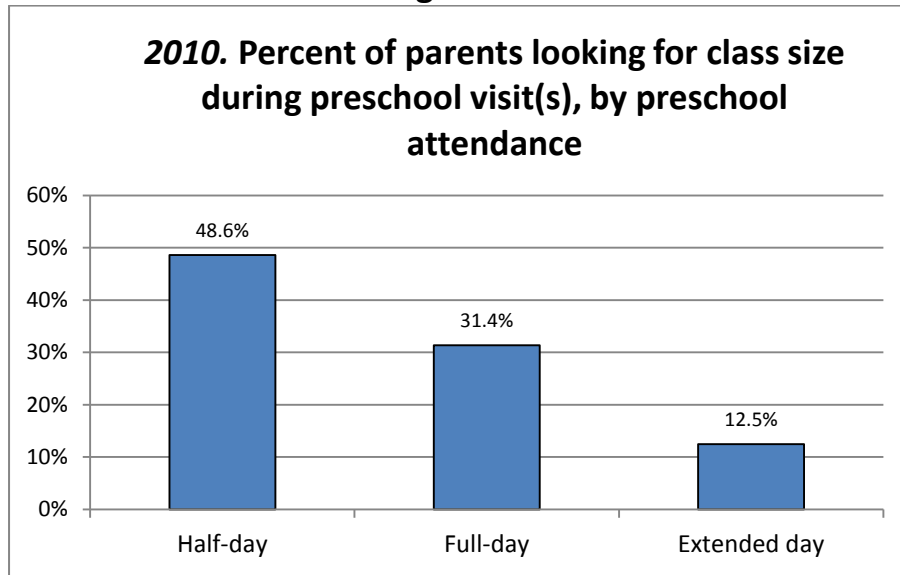
The more hours a child was enrolled in preschool, the greater the likelihood that the parent selected safety as an important criterion (Figure 34).

Figure 34



A high percentage of parents with children enrolled in half-day programs, identified class size/student-teacher ratio as important while those with children in extended day programs did not place as much emphasis on this factor (Figure 35).

Figure 35



Non-DPP Parents

Spanish language parents who participated in the focus group and enrolled their children in non- DPP approved preschool indicated that the recommendations from family and friends were the most influential factor in their selection of a particular preschool. These parents also visited multiple preschools before making their decision. When they visited they looked at how the students and families were treated, at student – teacher interactions and at whether parenting classes were available at the school.

B1. Did the number of Qualistar-rated and/or accredited Sites increase as a result of the program?

Through June 2010, the number of Qualistar rated sites participating in DPP grew to 257. In less than four years, DPP has grown to the current 257 and has become an important presence in preschool education in the city of Denver. Of the 273 sites on track to become DPP approved, 257 had received their approval. Of these 54 had received a Qualistar rating of 4-Stars and 138 sites had received a Qualistar rating of 3-Stars, the two highest possible ratings.

Table 10 shows the number of rated preschool sites by year of initial DPP approval and the sites' current Qualistar Ratings. The "Intro to Quality" category in Table 10 includes those sites that opted to be coached before entering the rating process as well as sites that are scheduled to be rated. Over time sites progress from the "Intro to Quality" and "Provisional" categories into the star rated categories.

Table 10

Number of Preschool Sites by Year of Initial DPP Approval and Current Qualistar Rating, June 2010 (Site Count & Percent With Specified Rating)								
Star Rating	Approved in 2008		Approved in 2009		Approved in 2010		Total Number of Sites in 2010	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
4-star	41	27%	11	14%	2	7%	54	21%
3-star	101	66%	36	46%	1	4%	138	54%
2-star	10	7%	19	24%	2	7%	31	12%
1-star	0	0%	3	4%	2	7%	5	2%
Provisional	0	0%	4	5%	1	4%	5	2%
Intro to Quality	0	0%	5	6%	19	71%	24	9%
Total	152		78		27		257	

Another important indicator of DPP's success in 2010 is the number of sites that engaged in the Qualistar process for the first time. A significant number of preschool sites, 27, joined the process to improve the quality of services they offer to families and children. Each year a number of preschool sites join the DPP quality improvement process at the Provisional, the Introduction to Quality, and the scheduled to be rated levels. Over time this participation leads to more star-rated sites. For example, many of the DPP initially approved programs in 2008 started at the Intro to Quality or Provisional (or star zero rating) levels. Over time these programs worked their way up to a higher star-rating. If this trend continues, DPP will have assisted a number of preschools to become Qualistar 1 to 4 star rated.

Non-DPP Providers

Community Home-based Providers

While the number of DPP-approved home-based providers has increased since the beginning of the program, many licensed home providers are still not enrolled in the program. Through interviews with several of these licensed, non- DPP home providers, the evaluators gained several important insights into the reasons that these providers have not yet joined DPP.

Home providers who were not in the Denver Preschool Program (DPP) expressed an interest in the program and a desire to enroll. All providers interviewed had concerns about DPP's effects on the preschool marketplace. Specifically, they mentioned that they had seen their four-year old population decrease because more families were sending their children to their local public school rather than enrolling the child in a home-based program. They worried that families think that schools are the best places to prepare for kindergarten even though some children thrive in the home setting where there is a low student to adult ratio.

The age of the children served by the home was also a major factor. Providers who currently had four year olds realized that while the four year olds made their site DPP-eligible today, when these children moved on and the providers filled the slots with children younger than four, the younger children would not be eligible for DPP assistance.

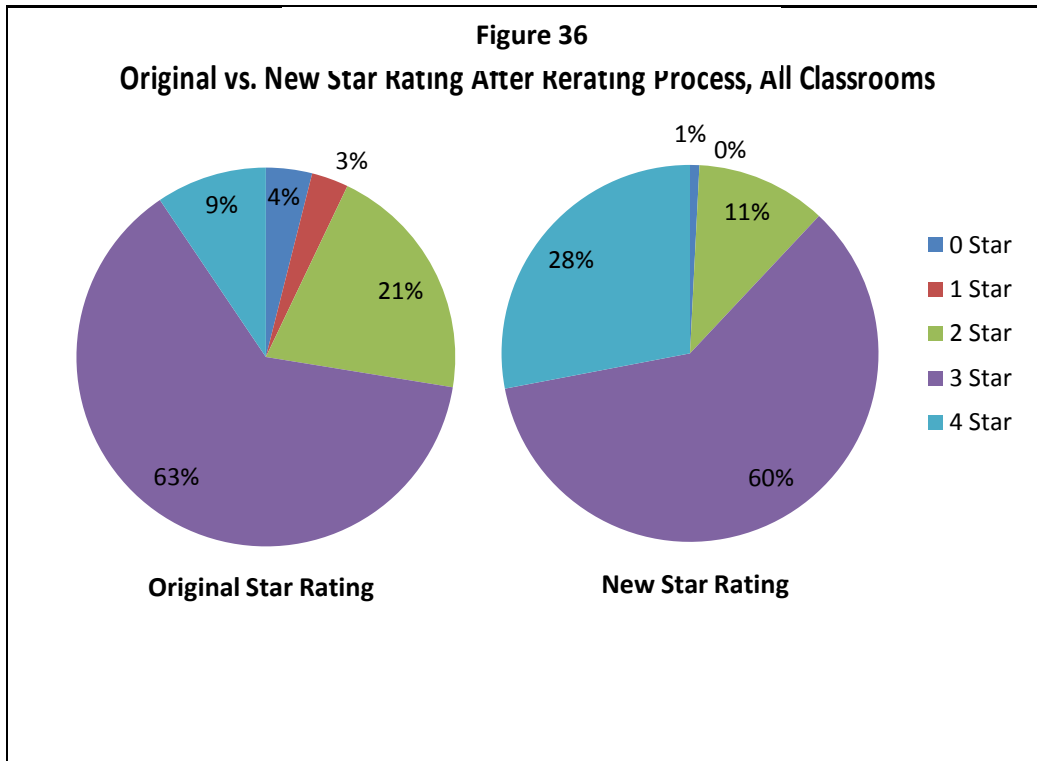
B2. Did the quantity of rated programs increase as a result of the program?

In prior years, this question was answered by documenting the providers' entry into and movement up the star rating classification system. Major changes observed were providers moving out of the "provisional," "intro to quality" and "in process" categories and into star rated categories. Though it could be argued that this movement represented an increase in site quality, it was more indicative of the number of new sites enrolling in DPP.

DPP requires that sites go through the re-rating process with Qualistar every two years. 2010 is the first year that the evaluation team was able to examine the results of the re-rating process for classrooms which had originally been rated by Qualistar when they joined the program in 2008. As of early April 2010, 127 classrooms, at a total of 74 sites, had been re-rated. This included 125 center-based classrooms, 59 at DPS sites, 66 at center-based sites and 2 at home- based sites⁶.

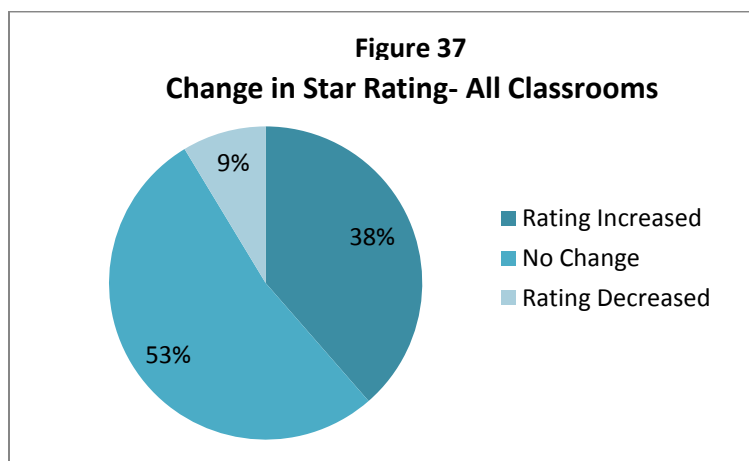
The two charts in Figure 36 provide a snapshot of the initial star ratings and the new ratings for the 127 classrooms, 59 DPS, 66 center-based and 2 home-based, which were re-rated in 2010.

⁶ One of the home-based sites included was relicensed as a center-based program after rerating, but is considered a home-based site for the purposes of the analysis.



As the pie chart on the left indicates, initially 72 % of classrooms received a rating of 3-Stars or 4 -stars. After the re-rating process, the percentage of classrooms with a 3 or 4-Star rating increased to 88% with 28% of classrooms earning the highest rating of 4-Stars. While 28% of classrooms had an initial rating of 2-Stars or less, upon re-rating only 12% of classrooms earned 2-Stars or less. The percentage of classrooms with a 0-Star rating decreased from four percent to one percent.

Figure 37 below shows the amount of ratings movement in this pool of classrooms.

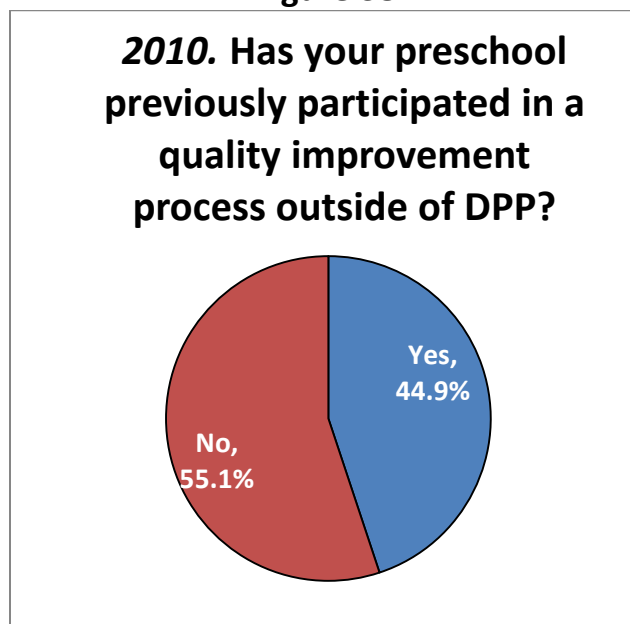


As a result of the re-rating process, ratings for 38% of the classrooms increased, ratings for 53% of the classrooms stayed the same and ratings for 9 percent of the classrooms decreased. The complete analysis of the Re-rating Process is contained in Appendix H.

B3. Did the quality-improvement grants and supports given by DPP to preschool providers help improve program quality?

In 2010, both statistical data and provider survey responses provide answers to this question. Before drawing conclusions from this data, the DPP quality improvement process must be placed in its historical context. Important preliminary information includes a determination of how many of the exiting DPP preschool sites had previously participated in a quality improvement process outside of DPP. As shown in Figure 38 fewer than half of the preschools surveyed reported participating in a quality improvement process prior to DPP.

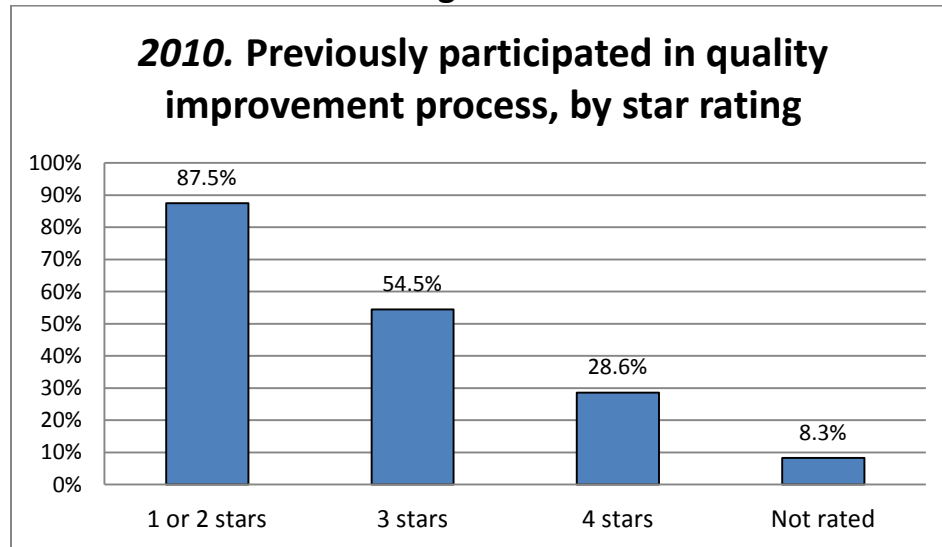
Figure 38



The percentage of preschools that reported previous participation in a quality improvement process on the 2009 survey was higher at 52.2%.

Preschools with lower Qualistar ratings were more likely than preschools with higher ratings or no ratings to have previously participated in a quality improvement process (Figure 39). These results reverse the 2009 pattern where preschools with higher Qualistar ratings were more likely than those with lower ratings to have previously participated in a quality improvement process.

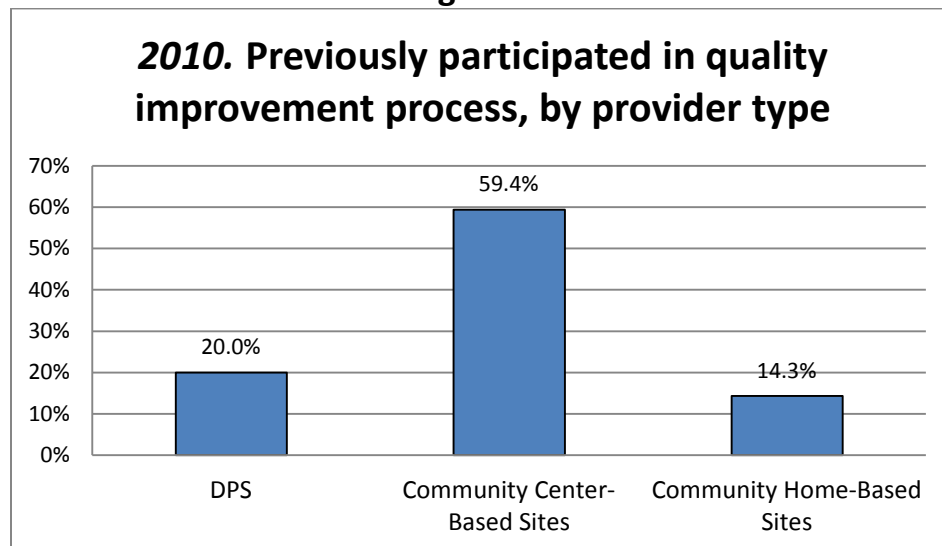
Figure 39



As in 2009, the School Readiness Program (House Bill 1238) and the Mayor’s Office for Education and Children (MOEC) were the most common sponsors of quality improvement efforts reported in the preschool provider survey.

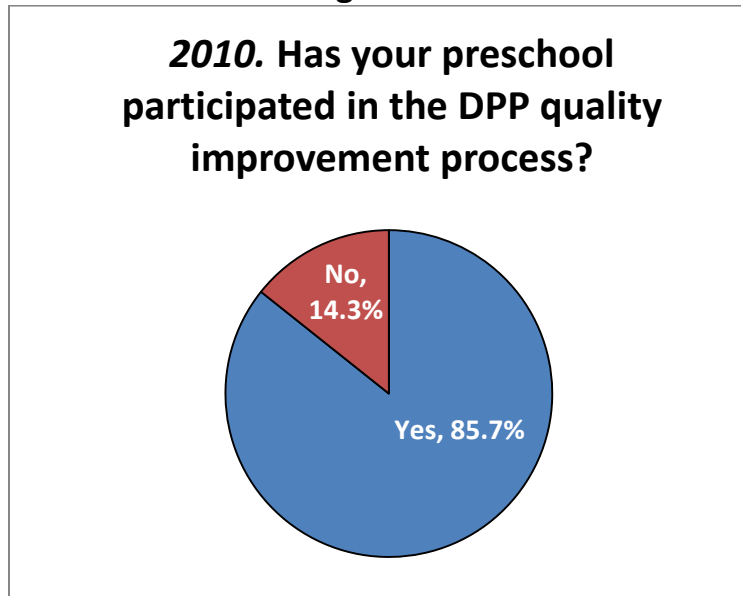
Center-based preschools were more likely to have participated in a previous quality improvement process than either DPS Early Childhood Education programs or home-based preschools (Figure 40).

Figure 40



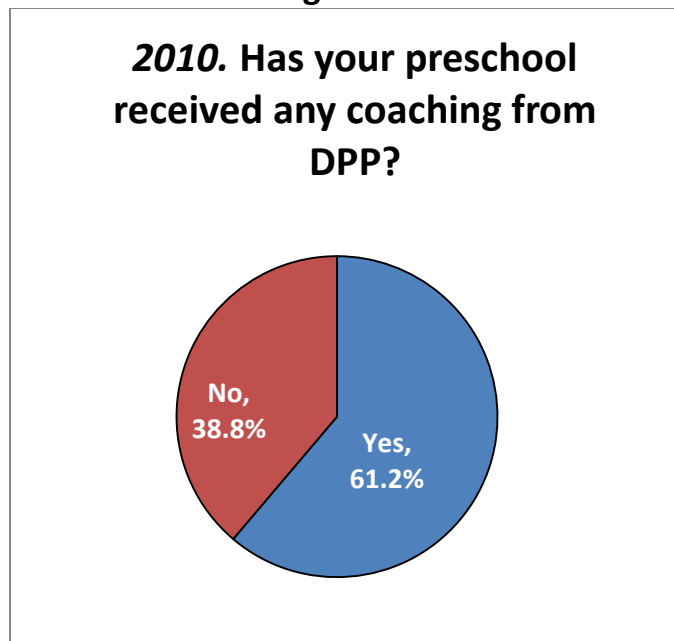
In 2010, more than four out of five preschools reported participating in the DPP quality improvement process (Figure 41). This represents a six percent increase from 2009.

Figure 41



Focusing on the coaching component, in 2010 more than 60% of preschools reported receiving coaching assistance from DPP (Figure 42). This represents an increase of 11.2% from 2009.

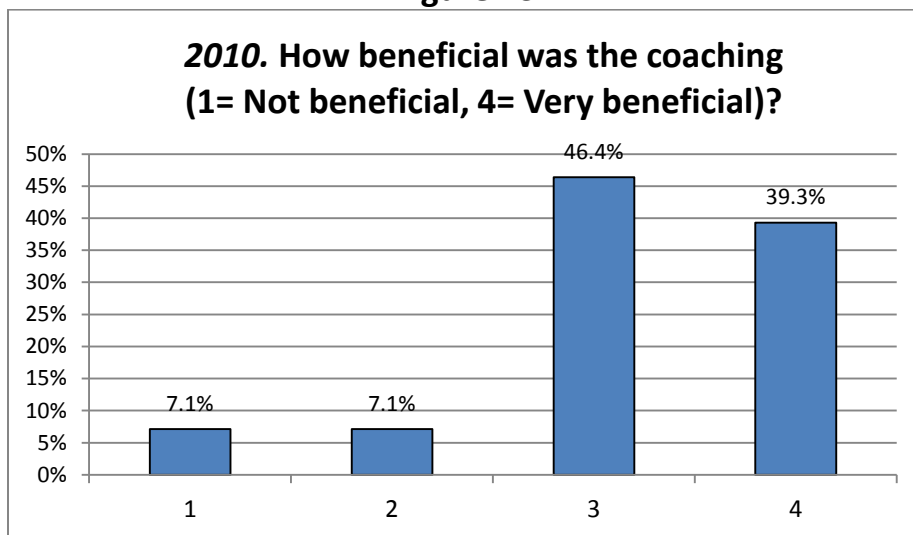
Figure 42



The preschools that rated the DPP coaching process gave the coaching high ratings (Figure 43). On a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is not beneficial and 4 is very beneficial, preschool respondents gave coaching an

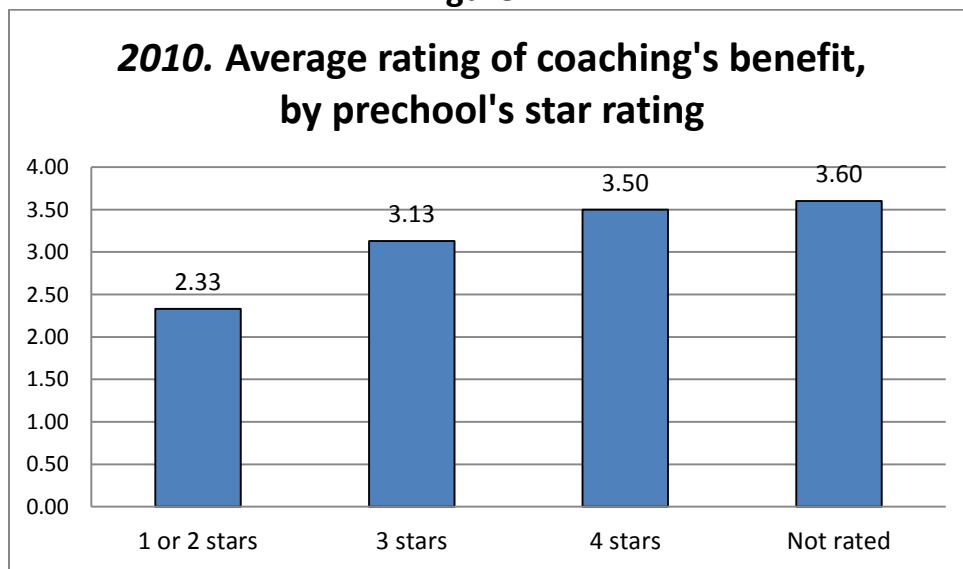
average rating of 3.18. While this average rating is fairly high, it represents a decrease from an average rating of 3.57 in 2009.

Figure 43



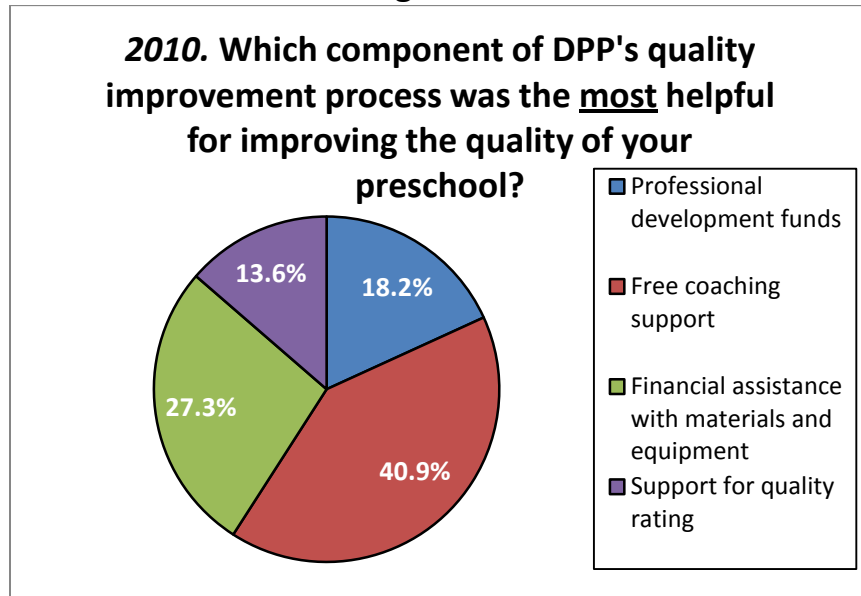
In 2010, preschool respondents with 1 or 2-Star Qualistar ratings assessed the benefits of coaching lower than preschools with higher ratings or no ratings (Figure 44).

Figure 44



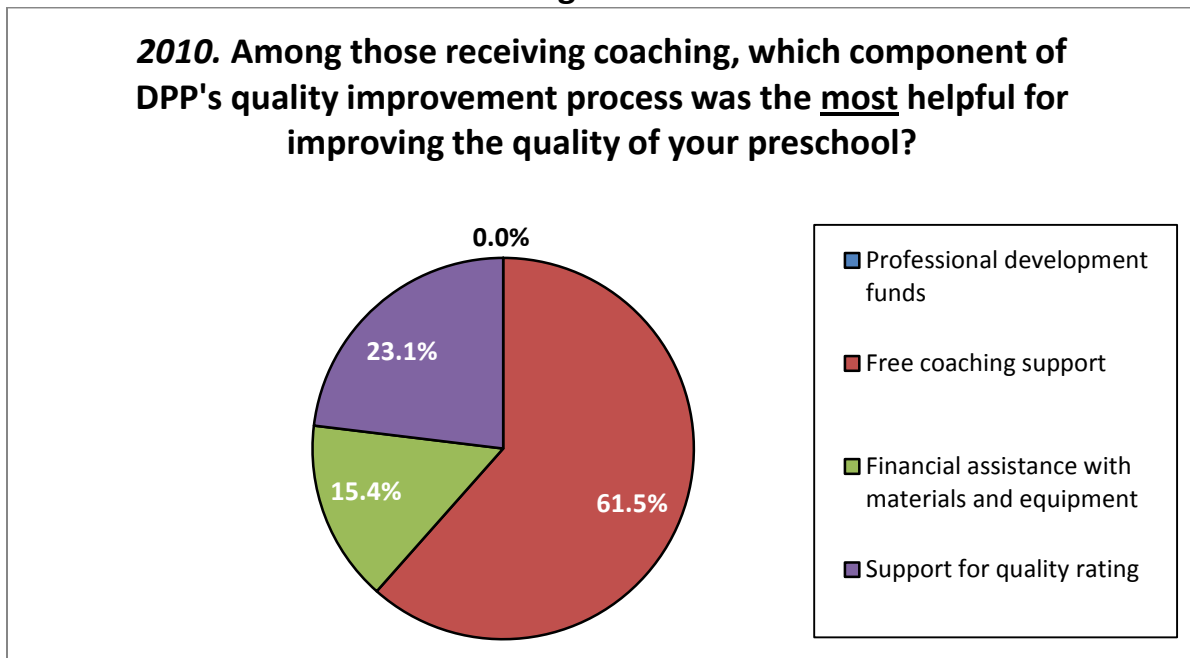
Overall preschool respondents indicated that the coaching support was a beneficial part of the DPP quality improvement process. When asked to select the component of DPP's quality improvement process that was the most helpful for improving the quality of their preschool, 40.9% selected coaching (Figure 45).

Figure 45



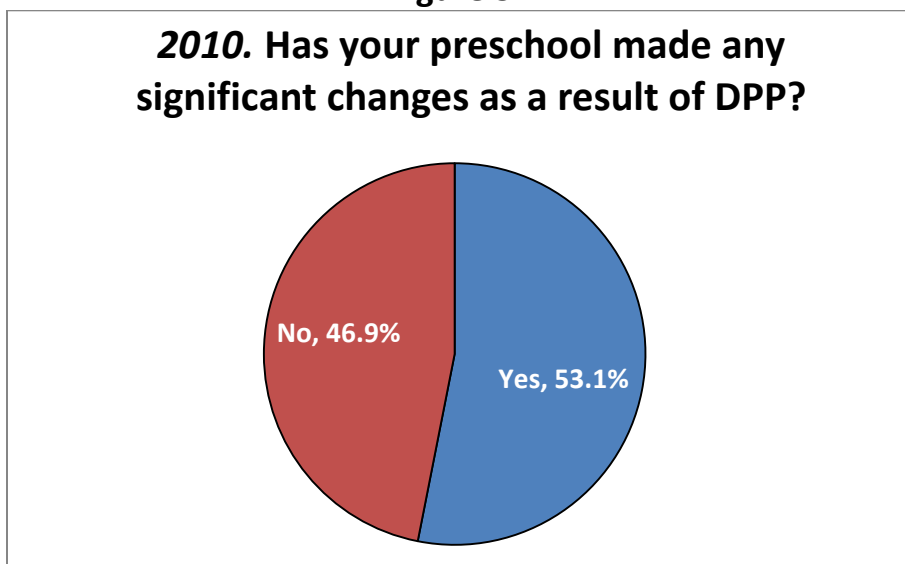
When this analysis is limited to the preschools that actually had received DPP coaching, the results are more dramatic. More than 60% of preschools that had received coaching rated the coaching support as the most helpful component of the DPP quality improvement process (Figure 46).

Figure 46



Finally, when asked on the survey about significant changes made as the result of participation in DPP, 53.1% of preschools leaders responded that they had made significant changes as a result of participating in DPP (Figure 51). This percentage is down from 63.8% in 2009. As the number of preschools that are new to DPP decreases, this percentage will probably continue to decline. Newly enrolled preschools are more likely to make changes as they first receive coaching and work to attain a higher star rating.

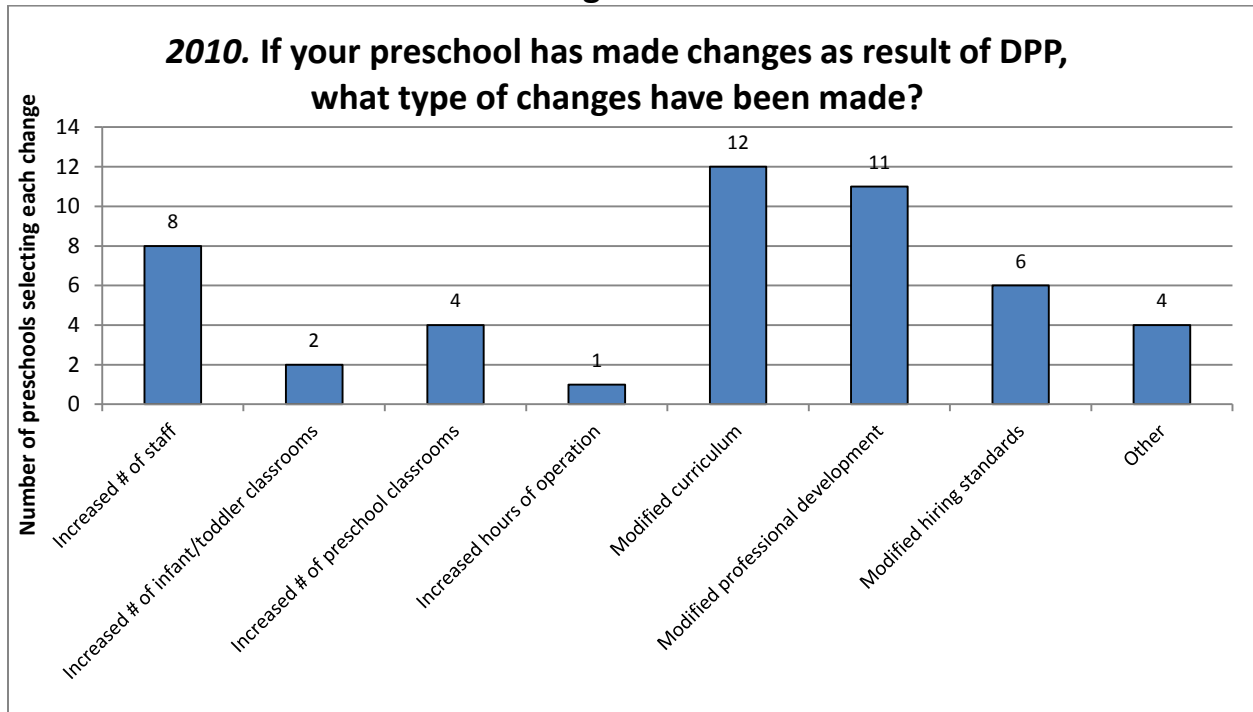
Figure 51



The provider survey included follow up questions asking about the changes that preschools had made. The list of changes included on the survey in 2010 was modified in part due to the changes that preschools reported making in 2009. As a result, the 2010 data provides a more comprehensive portrayal of the range of changes (Figure 52).

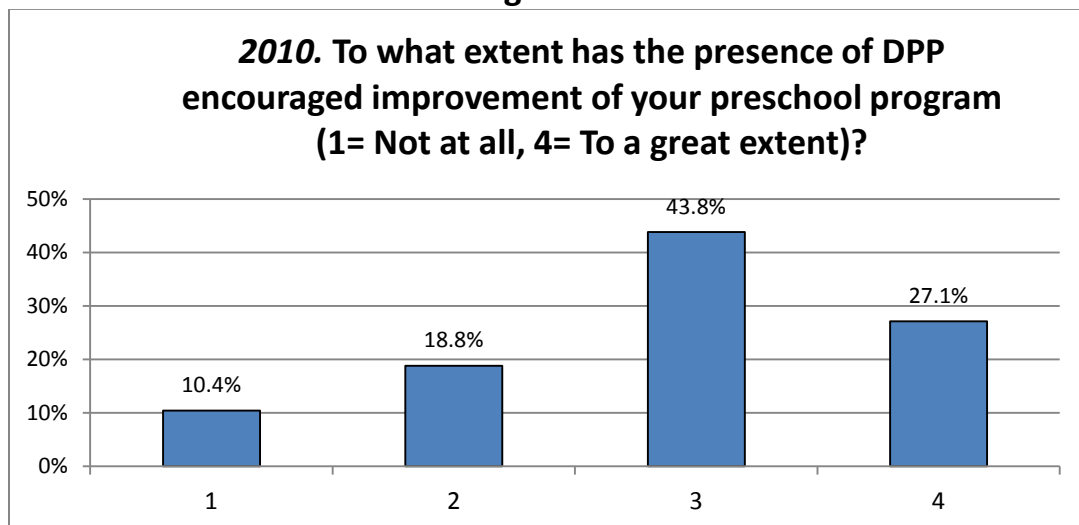
The most common changes that preschools made were modifications to the curriculum and modifications in professional development. The next most frequent changes were increases in number of staff and modifications of hiring standards. Four options on the list were not selected by any preschool respondent. These included the following: decreased number of staff, decreased number of infant/toddler classrooms, decreased number of preschool classrooms, and decreased hours of operation.

Figure 52



The vast majority, 89.5%, of surveyed preschools reported that the presence of DPP encouraged their preschool to improve at least somewhat; and 27.1% of preschools reported that DPP encouraged them to improve the program “to a great extent” (Figure 53).

Figure 53



B4. Are other providers entering the marketplace for preschool services?

Several sources of information assist in the examination of this question. DPS enrollment data is first source of data. Every DPS site that offers Early Childhood Education (ECE) programming now participates in DPP. In addition, DPS expanded the length of its daily ECE program from four to six hours.

Interviews with home-based providers provided the second data source. All of the home-based providers reported seeing a shift in how the families they work with think about preschool. They reported that more parents think about preschool as an educational program for children rather than just daycare. The providers all reported that as a result of this change in thinking, they have had families with four-year olds move their children into their neighborhood public school. “The public schools are getting the four-year olds,” one home provider stated.

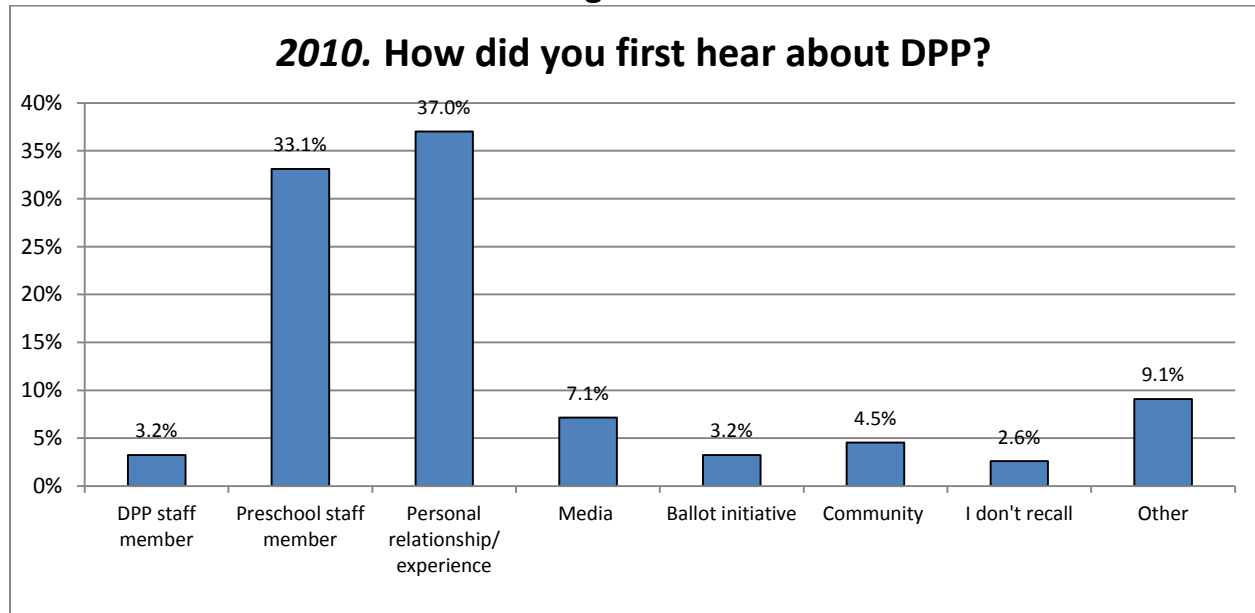
The evaluation team also attempted to examine licensed capacity data to answer this question. However, the evaluators found that licensed spaces are not tracked by individual age group, for example, infant, young toddler, older toddler and preschool, and thus were unable to draw conclusions based on this data.

Finally, the most scientific way to answer the question is to conduct an analysis of Colorado’s National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) data for the city and county of Denver. The “market rate survey” collects enrollment and licensed capacity. The survey was conducted in January 2009 and will be conducted again in 2011, allowing a two-year comparison. Because the survey data for the years before 2009 are not archived in Colorado, it was not possible to analyze the data for this report. In 2011, it will be possible to analyze the changes in enrollment and licensed capacity from 2009 in the following categories: centers versus homes; full versus part-time; and infant, young toddler, older toddler and preschool.

D1. Are parents informed about the existence of the Denver Preschool Program and about how to apply for the tuition credits?

Parents currently enrolled in DPP found out about the program through a variety of sources. Personal relationships and experience was the most common source of information about DPP followed closely by direct contact with a preschool staff member (Figure 50). The *media*, a category that includes TV, radio, Internet and mail, accounted for just over 7% of initial information about the program.

Figure 50



Despite the fact that in 2010 the response options were modified slightly, the 2010 results are similar to the 2009 results. The only difference between 2009 and 2010 was the percentage of parents who first heard about DPP from a DPP staff member; the percentage declined from 10.9% to 3.2%.

As in 2009, how parents first heard about DPP varied according to ethnicity and the type of preschool where their child was enrolled. There were no significant differences in 2010 by income level or home language.

By Race/Ethnicity

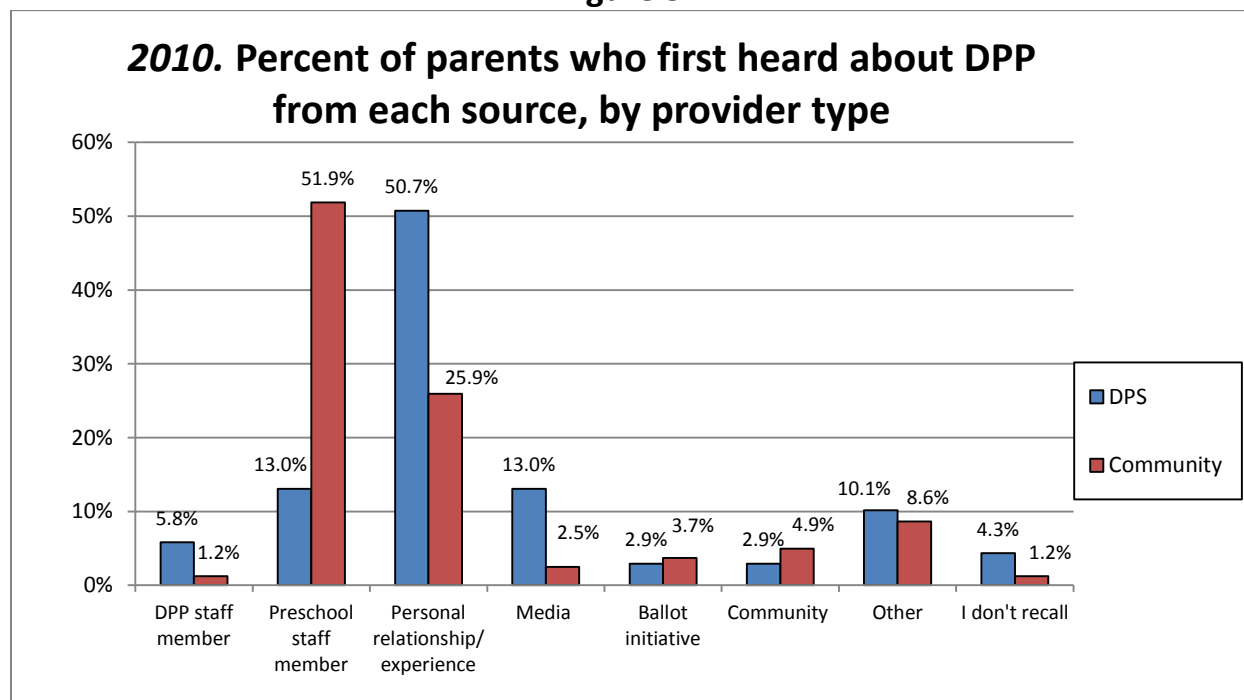
Parents of black children and children in the “Other” racial category (not black, Hispanic, or white) were most likely to first hear about DPP through a personal relationship /experience while parents of white children were the least likely to have found out about the program in this manner (Table 11). Parents of white children were the most likely to have first learned about DPP from a preschool staff member.

Table 11

2010. Percent of parents who first heard about DPP from each source, by child's ethnicity				
Source	Child's Ethnicity			
	Black	Hispanic	White	Other
DPP staff member	4.5%	6.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Preschool staff member	27.3%	28.8%	44.4%	21.1%
Personal relationship/ experience	50.0%	33.9%	24.1%	68.4%
Media	0.0%	11.9%	7.4%	0.0%
Ballot initiative	0.0%	0.0%	7.4%	5.3%
Community	0.0%	5.1%	5.6%	5.3%
Other	18.2%	8.5%	9.3%	0.0%
I don't recall	0.0%	5.1%	1.9%	0.0%

By Type of Preschool Program

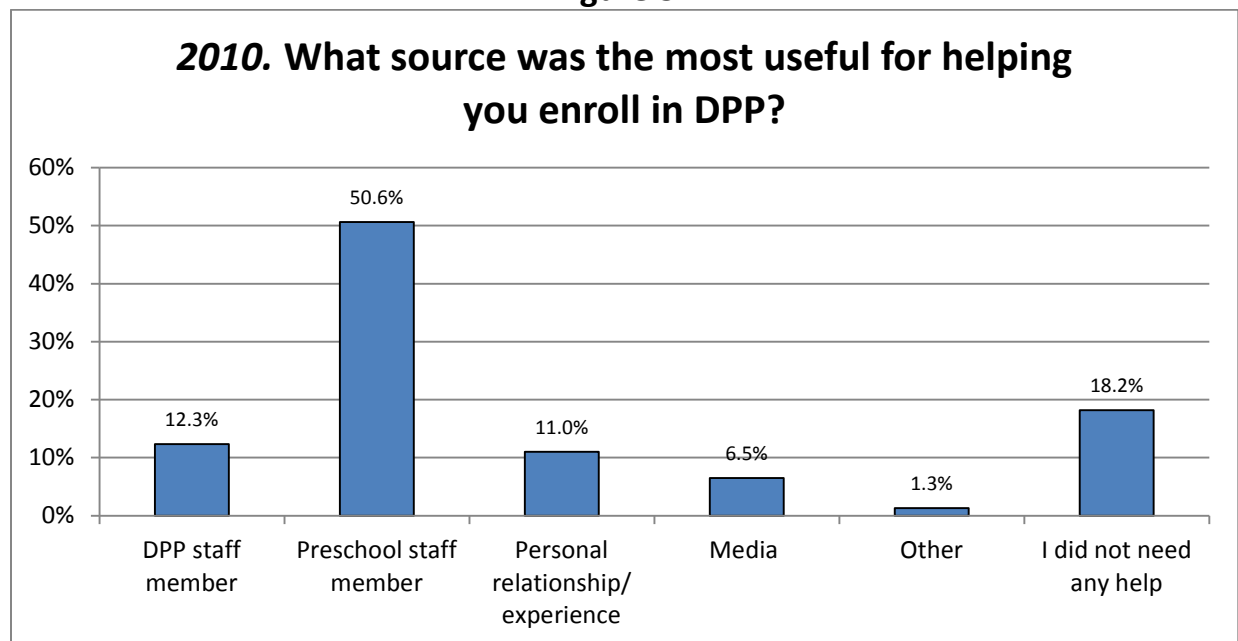
Where families first heard about DPP also varied according to whether their child was enrolled at a community or DPS preschool (Figure 51). The 2010 patterns were similar to those in 2009. Community parents were much more likely to hear about DPP from a preschool staff member, while DPS parents were more likely to hear through a personal relationship or experience.

Figure 51

Useful Sources for Parents in the Enrollment Process

The parent survey also explored what sources were most useful to families while enrolling in DPP (Figure 52). More than half of surveyed parents found a preschool staff member's assistance useful in the enrollment process. Nearly a fifth of parents indicated that they did not need any help enrolling in DPP.

Figure 52



Although the response options on the 2010 survey were refined and modified from the 2009 survey, the patterns of responses were similar in both years. The most dramatic change was in the percentage of parents who cited DPP staff as the most useful source; this area decreased from 20.7% in 2009 to 12.3% in 2010. The evaluators found no meaningful differences by race or ethnicity or income in what sources were most helpful for enrollment.

Preschool survey results indicated that DPP has made reasonable efforts to inform parents about the availability of tuition credits and the quality improvement process. On a scale of 1 to 4 (with 4 being excellent) preschool leaders gave DPP a rating of 2.84 in the provision of information to families about the availability of tuition credits, and a slightly lower rating, 2.65, on the quality improvement process (Table 12). Both of these average ratings increased from 2009, when providers rated the efforts to inform parents about the availability of tuition credits at 2.71 and efforts to inform parents about the quality improvement process at 2.52.

Table 12

2010. Preschool ratings of DPP's efforts to inform parents (On a scale of 1 to 4, 1= Poor, 4= Excellent)	
Type of Information	Average Rating
About availability of tuition credits	2.84
About the quality improvement process	2.65

D2. Which strategies for communicating with families are most effective – the Internet, community meetings, public service announcements, or advertising?

Parents received most of their information about DPP from DPP staff, preschool staff, and fellow parents and families (Figure 51). Only 6.5% get their information from the media.

Communication with Hispanic Families

Discussion during a focus group with Spanish-speaking families who are currently not enrolled in DPP further highlighted the need for direct, personal communication. Only one of the parents who participated in this focus group had heard of the Denver Preschool Program. When compared to the 2008 and 2009 focus groups, this is the lowest instance of familiarity with DPP.

As indicated in previous non-DPP enrolled Spanish-speaking focus groups, parents identified word of mouth and personal relationships to be the most effective means of advertising DPP. Participants suggested that DPP ask parents who have or have had children in DPP programs to spread the word to neighbors, family members, and friends.

Effective outreach to the Spanish-speaking community might include the following: posting and distributing fliers throughout Spanish-speaking neighborhoods; showing commercials during telenovelas (Spanish language soap operas); seeking out more coverage on Univision and other news programs; and advertising on the radio in the evening and via radio news programs. Parents suggested that DPP develop a relationship with DPS, and distribute information about DPP through school bulletins and fliers. They also suggested that DPP negotiate with DPS schools to host DPP information sessions. When advertising the Denver Preschool Program, financial support should be the first point that is emphasized.

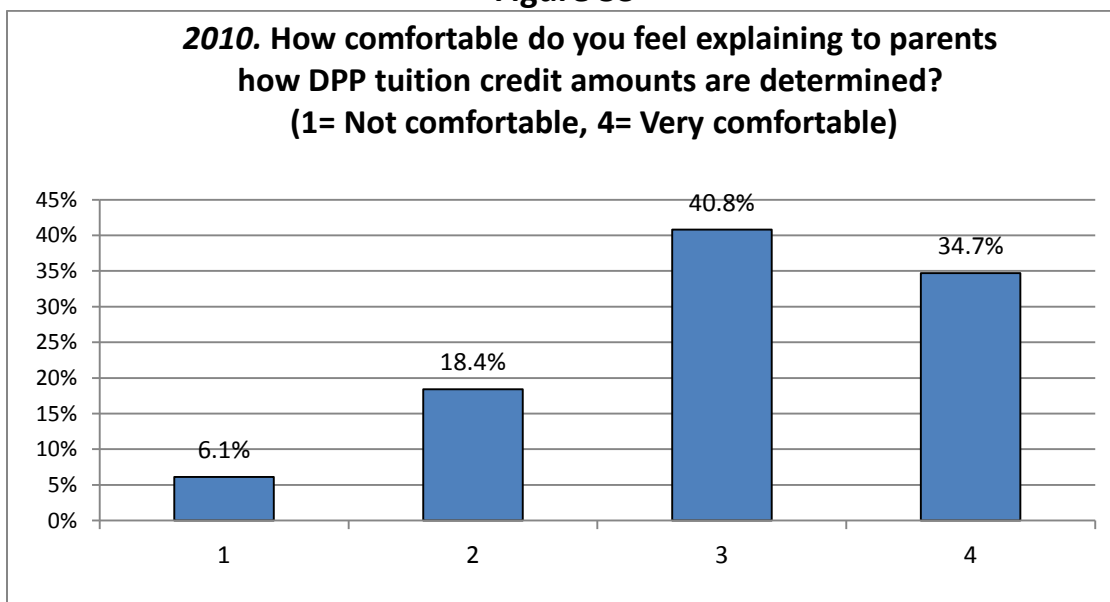
Interviews with home-based providers who serve Spanish-speaking families were another source of several other specific recommendations concerning the sharing of information. One provider suggested that more of the DPP information be available in Spanish. She also suggested that the training sessions for potential DPP providers be conducted in Spanish, as well as in English. While there is currently an interpreter present at trainings conducted in English, this is often inadequate because too much information gets lost in translation, and Spanish-speakers struggle to participate in an English dominant environment. This provider suggested that DPP conduct provider trainings in Spanish in a separate

room so that Spanish speakers can fully participate and gain a full understanding of what is going on. Conducting training sessions in Spanish will improve the experience for the providers, and will improve the quality and caliber of education and information they are able to offer the families they serve. Finally, the provider suggested that the banners for DPP be available in Spanish or at least include the phrase, “Se habla español.”

Communication Regarding Tuition Credits

Because of the significance of the connection between staff and families, providers need to have staff members who are able to act as liaisons and to develop methods to educate parents about DPP and enroll children in the program. The majority of preschool providers were comfortable explaining to parents how DPP tuition credit amounts were determined (Figure 53). On a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is ‘not comfortable’ and 4 is ‘very comfortable’, the average comfort rating was 3.04. This 2010 rating is an improvement from the 2009 average of 2.85.

Figure 53

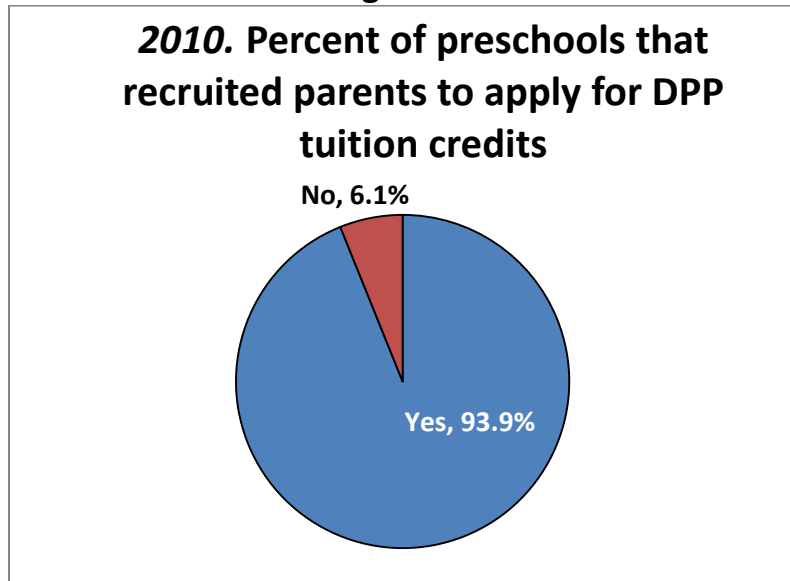


Provider survey respondents from community center-based preschools and home-based sites in particular were more likely to be comfortable explaining how DPP tuition credits are determined than the DPS preschool respondents. Home-based community preschools rated their average comfort level as 3.43, compared with 3.16 for community center-based sites and 2.40 for DPS preschools.

Recruiting Parents to Apply for DPP Tuition Credits

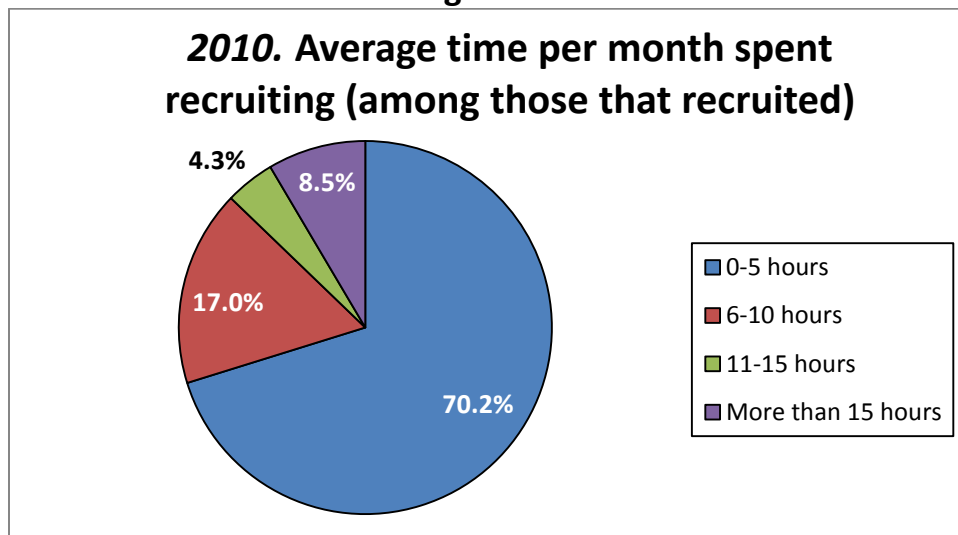
The 2010 survey found that nearly all of surveyed DPP preschools, 93.9%, actively recruited parents to apply for DPP tuition credits (Figure 54).

Figure 54



More than 70% of the surveyed preschools spent five hours or less a month recruiting families. A small portion, 8.5% spent more than 15 hours a month recruiting (Figure 55).

Figure 55

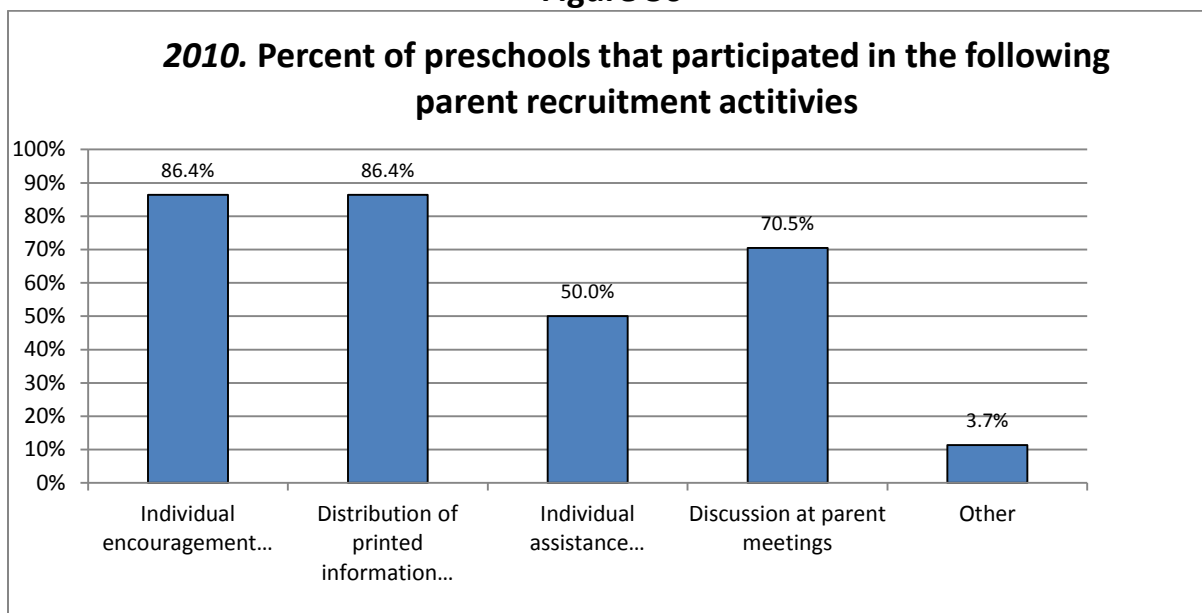


The amount of time spent recruiting parents to apply for tuition credits decreased in 2010. In 2009, nearly 49% of preschools spent more than five hours per month on DPP parent recruitment. In 2010 that number was 30%.

Either less recruitment was occurring or the preschools were becoming more efficient in their methods of recruitment. Other survey data supports the latter conclusion. Most preschools reported engaging in

multiple recruitment activities during the year. These activities included encouraging families to enroll and complete applications, distributing printed informational materials, and providing individual assistance to families during the application process (Figure 56).

Figure 56



While the percentage of preschools reporting that they provided individual encouragement to parents to apply for DPP was at about the same level in 2010 as in 2009, the number of preschools reporting that they distributed printed DPP information on site and discussed DPP applications at parents meetings rose in 2010. In 2010, preschool leaders were less likely to report providing individual assistance to parents.

E1. Does the application system facilitate family participation?

Ease of Application Process

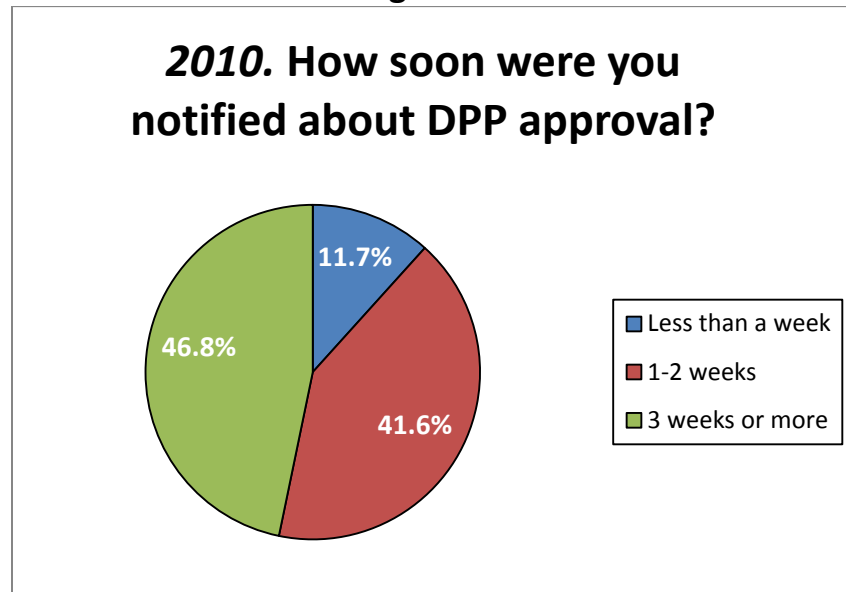
When surveyed parents were asked to rate the ease of the application process on a scale of 1 to 4 where 4 was “easy,” the average rating was 3.50, indicating that the majority of families found the application process to be easy. This result is an improvement over the 2009 average of 3.13. Unlike 2009, there were no significant differences in the perceptions of the difficulty of the DPP application process based on the child’s ethnicity or home language, or the type of preschool provider.

Only 17.7% of responding parents asked DPP for assistance during the application process, down from 31.7% in 2009. Parents who asked for help gave the assistance provided an average rating of 3.46 on a scale of 1 to 4, where 4 was excellent. This rating was nearly identical to the 2009 rating of 3.48. Parents who reported applying directly to DPP, instead of DPS, gave the assistance an average rating of 3.65.

Speed of Application Process

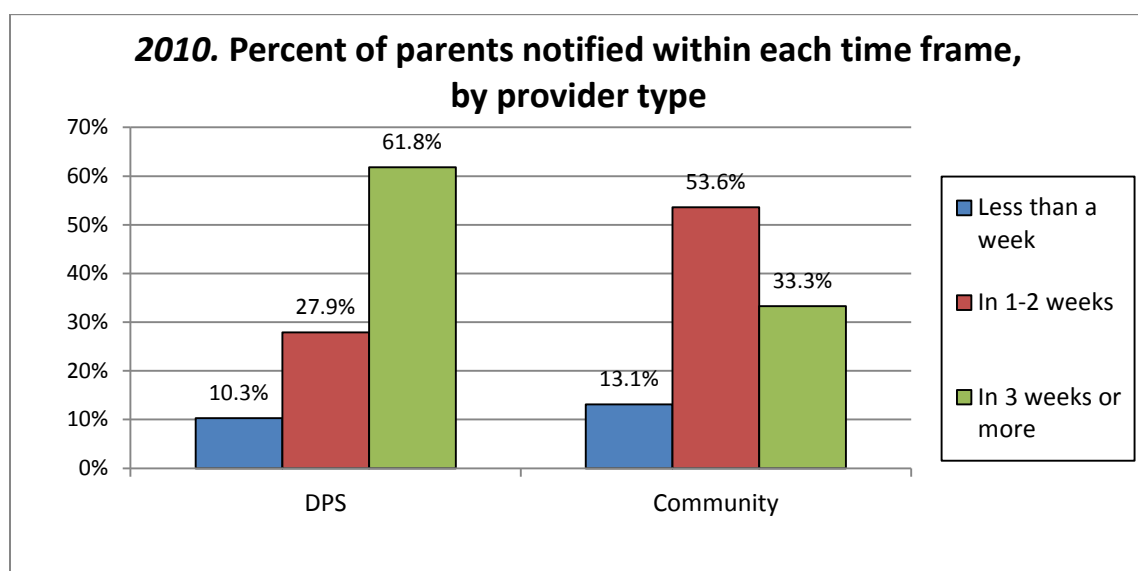
Under half of surveyed parents reported waiting at least three weeks before being notified about the approval of their application (Figure 57). This represented a decrease of almost 16% from 2009.

Figure 57



Parents whose children attended DPS preschools were more likely to wait three weeks or longer than parents of children who attended community preschools. In 2010, 61.8% of families applying through DPS took three or more weeks to receive notification of enrollment decisions, while only 33.3% of families applying to community providers took three or more weeks (Figure 58). For community providers this is an improvement from 2009 when it took three or more weeks for 55% of the families.

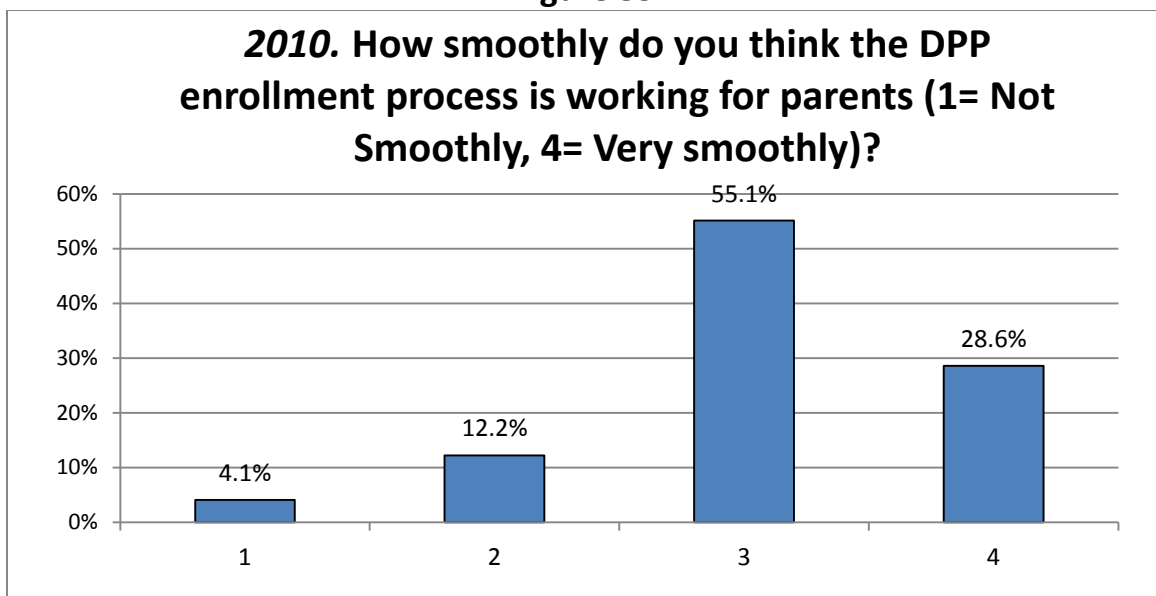
Figure 58



Smoothness of Application Process

The evaluators also asked preschool providers to rate how smoothly they thought the DPP enrollment process worked for families. On a scale of 1 to 4 where 4 represents, “Very smoothly,” the average rating was 3.08 (Figure 59). This rating is an improvement from the 2.79 average of 2009. DPS preschools gave the DPP parent enrollment process a lower average rating than community center-based or community home-based preschools (2.20 vs. 3.38 and 3.30 respectively).

Figure 59

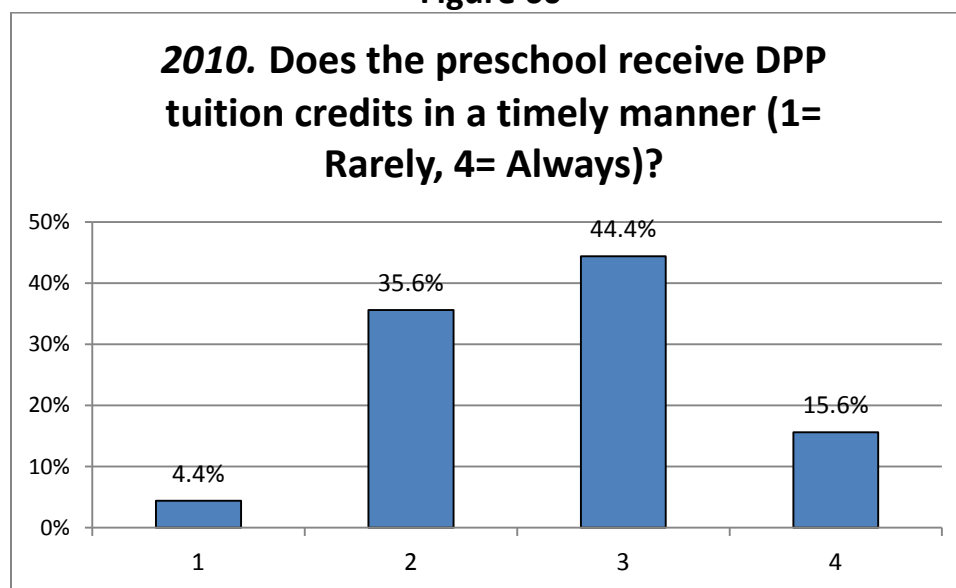


E2. Does the system deliver information and payments to providers in a timely manner?

Timeliness of Payment of Tuition Credits

Providers were asked about their experiences working with the DPP payment system, specifically whether they received DPP tuition credits in a timely manner. On a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is ‘rarely’ and 4 is ‘always’, preschools reported an average rating of 2.71 (Figure 60). This rating is virtually identical to the 2009 average rating of 2.72.

Figure 60

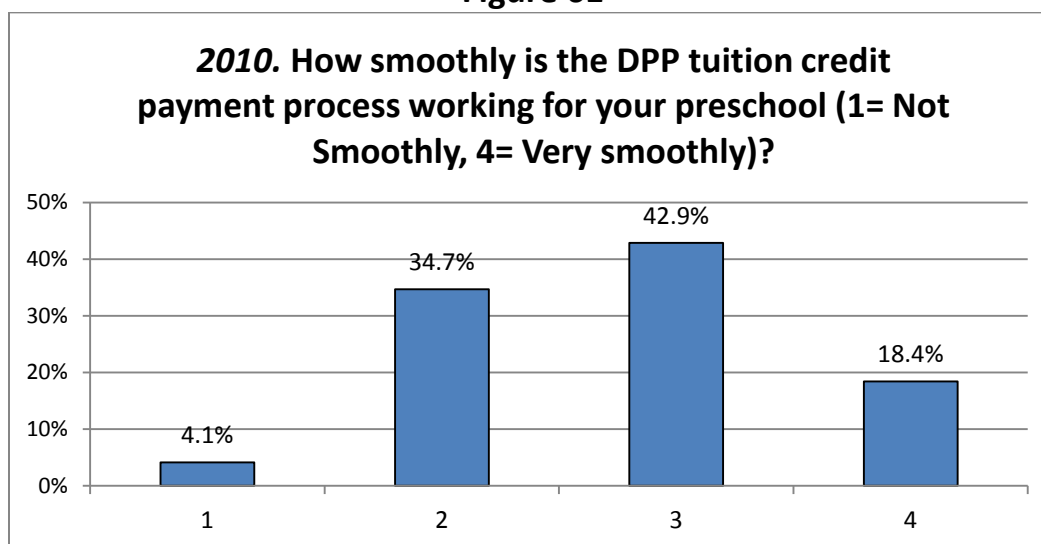


E3. Does the system have an acceptable error rate in terms of family application, student attendance and aid distribution?

Speed and Accuracy of the Tuition Credit Payment Process

Preschool providers were also asked on the survey to rate how smoothly the tuition payment process worked. On a scale of 1 to 4, where 4 represents, “Very smoothly,” providers gave DPP an average rating of 2.76 (Figure 61).

Figure 61

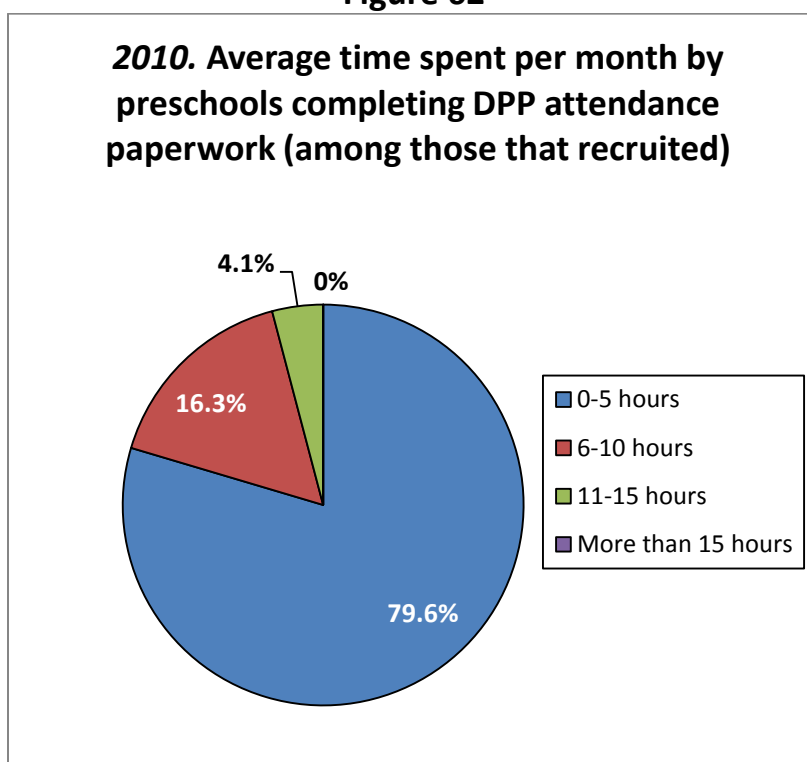


The average rating for 2010 was an increase from the 2009 average rating of 2.54. While DPP has improved the speed and accuracy of the payment process over the course of the last year, there is still need for improvement.

Amount of Time Expended on Attendance Paperwork

Another area related to speed and accuracy of the tuition credit process is the amount of time preschools spend each month completing attendance paperwork. Nearly four out of five preschools (79.2%) spent less than six hours per month completing this paperwork (Figure 62). The survey results from 2010 do not reflect a significant change from 2009. It may be helpful for DPP to offer to work with preschools that do spend a lot of time on DPP attendance paperwork and assist them in reducing the time spent on this task.

Figure 62



Other Operational Concerns about DPP

Preschools were also asked about their biggest DPP operational concerns. More than 35% reported no operational concerns. The next largest sector, 19%, mentioned the following two issues: the time and effort needed to prepare for the rating process, and the fairness/accuracy of the rating process (Table 13). Improving the rating process and better explaining both the rating process and the results to participating preschools could moderate these concerns.

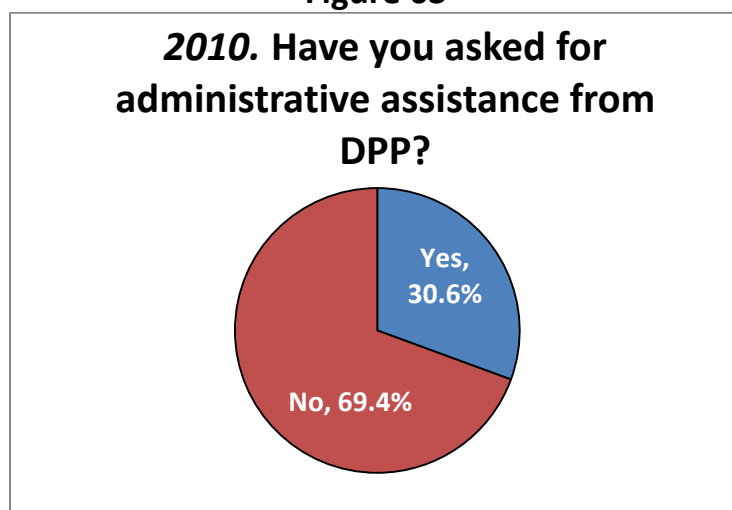
Table 13

What is your biggest operational concern about DPP?		
Operational Concern	%	#
No operational concerns	35.7%	15
The time/effort to manage the tuition credit process	9.5%	4
The time/effort to recruit parents	0.0%	0
The time/effort to prepare for the rating process	19.0%	8
The time/effort to track attendance	9.5%	4
Fairness/accuracy of the rating process	19.0%	8
The time/effort for parents to enroll	2.4%	1
Other	4.8%	2

It is noteworthy that the percentage of preschools with no operational concerns about DPP increased 12.6% from 2009 to 2010. The percentage that reported that the time/effort to manage the tuition credit process was their biggest concern decreased dramatically, going from 28.2% in 2009 to 9.5% in 2010 (Table 13).

Less than a third of preschools reported having asked DPP for administrative assistance in 2010 (Figure 63). These providers sought answers to questions ranging from questions about the program to more specific questions on payments or parent applications.

Figure 63

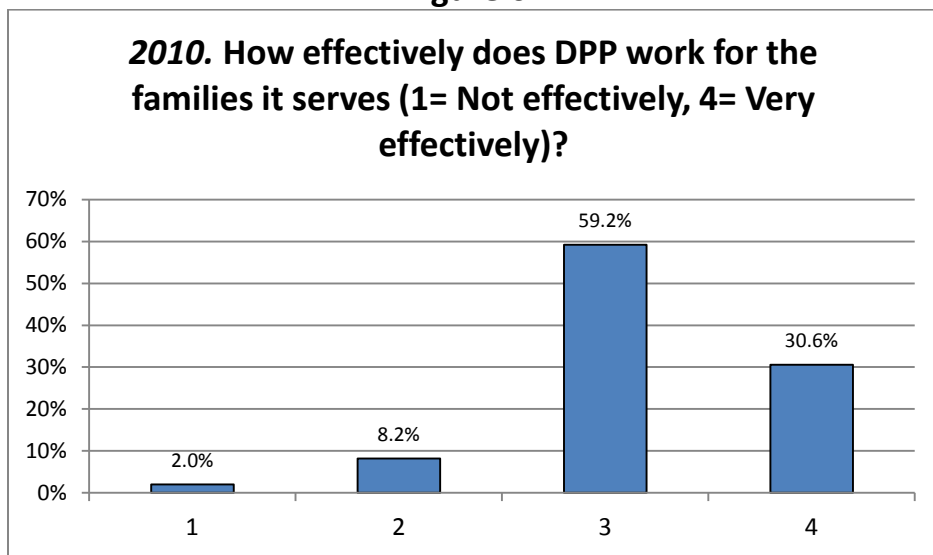


Effectiveness of DPP for the Families it serves

When preschools were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of DPP for the families they served, they assigned the program an average rating of 3.18 on scale of 1 to 4 where 4 is “Very effectively.” Only one

preschool responded that it was “not effective” (Figure 64). The average rating is identical to the average rating in 2009.

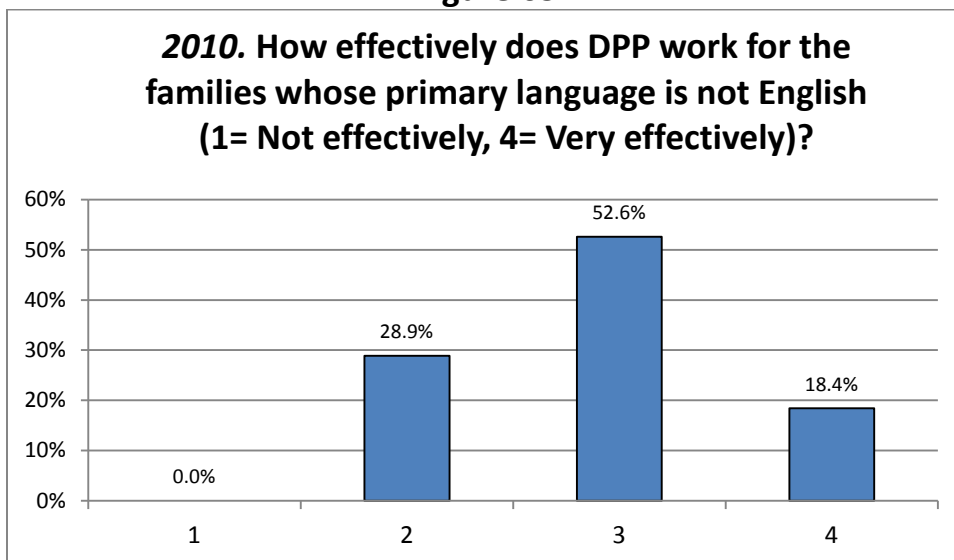
Figure 64



Effectiveness of DPP for the Families Whose Primary Language is Not English

The survey also asked providers how effective DPP was for families whose primary language was not English (Figure 65). The average rating of 2.89 on a scale of 1 to 4 where 4 is “Very effectively” was lower than the program-wide average rating of 3.18.

Figure 65



F1-3. Do providers and DPP have a working understanding of the impact other funding streams have on DPP participation? Does family participation in other preschool funding streams influence parent participation in DPP? Can preschool funding be simplified for providers and parents?

Several questions on the provider survey asked about the topic of other potential preschool funding sources. As in 2009, the survey results revealed that this is a difficult area for both providers and parents. Providers reported a lot of confusion about how the various funding streams, including DPP tuition credits, work together.

During the 2010 school year, DPP convened a working group to try to design a single online application for the multiple funding sources (for example, CCCAP, DPP, etc.). By the spring of 2010, the group had determined that due to the differing application requirements of the various assistance programs, generating a common application was unworkable and ended this effort.

The survey also asked parents a number of questions about their participation in other preschool funding programs. The responses to these questions were inconsistent. The evaluators concluded that DPP parents either did not know about and /or did not understand the various funding programs that are available to help pay for their children's preschool education. This reported confusion about the various funding streams on the part of parents prevented the evaluators from conducting a meaningful analysis of whether this confusion varied significantly across income, ethnic or language groups.

Conclusion

The Denver Preschool Program (DPP) was created to encourage the families of children in the year before kindergarten to voluntarily participate in quality preschool programs and thus increase the likelihood that children will be successful in kindergarten and beyond.

In less than four years, DPP has grown from a highly contested but successful ballot initiative into an important presence in preschool education in the city of Denver. Through June 2010, the following milestones had been achieved:

- A total of 164 providers ,operating at 273 sites with 566 classrooms serving DPP enrolled students, were on track to be approved as DPP providers;
- A total of 5,921 children in 2009-10 received approval for DPP tuition credits;
- Of the 273 sites on track to become DPP approved, 257 had received their approval. Of these 54 had received a Qualistar rating of 4-Stars and 138 sites had received a Qualistar rating of 3-Stars, the two highest ratings; and
- In 2010, a total of 127 classrooms at 74 sites complete the re-rating process.

In this third year of the program, staff, board members and operating partners continued to conduct business in an effective manner in an economic environment that was extraordinarily challenging. The Program was focused and responsive while operating within severe fiscal constraints. Based on data collected from numerous points of contact between the program and the Denver community, the evaluator concluded that DPP has a solid base of public support among the program's core constituents. This good will among core constituents opens channels of communication, encourages families from all income tiers to participate in the program, and encourages providers to improve the quality of the services they offer.

The program faces several challenges in the coming years. Giving special attention to the following matters is critical to the continued success of the program.

- ***Managing DPP's finances and tuition credits offered in difficult financial times.*** DPP is a unique program in Denver. It has a dedicated income stream, a limited fiscal reserve, with a demand for its services that changes from year to year. Staff and board members interviewed this year expressed a belief that the organization's business management practices were up to the task of managing the program's explosive growth and changing financial circumstances. Whether these beliefs are validated over time will be examined in future evaluations. The management systems and forecasting tools in place today are working and are viewed as functioning much more smoothly than in any past year of the program's operation.
- ***Strengthening DPP's partnership with Denver Public Schools (DPS).*** DPP's partnership with DPS is a unique and strong relationship that is becoming more efficient. DPS has expanded the operating hours of its preschool (ECE) services and enhanced the quality of its program. DPP's focus on quality and the tuition credit program have been instrumental in encouraging DPS to make these changes. This partnership has brought high quality preschool programming to significant numbers of lower-income and language-minority families.

The DPP-DPS joint registration process in 2009-10 ran significantly more smoothly than in the previous year. The interaction between DPS and ACS, DPP's registration contractor, was characterized as very good from both sides. The only remaining concern is the handling of birth certificates. The practice of allowing a parent to register a child using a nickname rather than the child's official name can result in future record keeping problems. Both sides are working to address this concern.

Parental understanding of the role that DPP plays in supporting the school district's effort is a continuing area of concern. In addition, other providers are particularly interested in how DPS' participation in DPP affects the Denver market for preschool services. Sound evaluation data and good communication are needed to keep this relationship mutually beneficial.

- ***Identifying methods for attracting additional home providers into DPP.*** DPP has made exceptional progress in finding a way to encourage DPS and the vast majority of community providers to participate in the program. Though they enroll fewer students, licensed home-based providers are the "last frontier" for DPP. Home-based providers offer a number of reasons for not participating in DPP including not having a steady supply of children in the year before kindergarten and not being able to spend the time away from their business needed for staff development and training. If DPP is serious about recruiting home-based providers, different approaches that accommodate the needs of these providers will be needed.
- ***Continuing to recruit providers that serve culturally and linguistically diverse families.*** This was also an area of recommended concentration in last year's evaluation report. Again this past year, due in large part to the slots available through DPS, DPP was successful in recruiting large numbers of language-minority families into the program. This is excellent news and much appreciated. Based on the evaluators' conversations with home-based providers in primarily Spanish language neighborhoods and with Spanish language parents in the focus group, the evaluators concluded that parents and providers not involved with the program through DPS have less information about DPP and do not understand the program as well as those who have a connection with DPS. In the coming year, the recruiting emphasis should again focus on smaller community center based and home-based providers that effectively serve culturally and linguistically diverse families.

In short, DPP is realizing its goals and managing its financial resources.

Appendix A: 2009-10 Parent Survey

Denver Preschool Program (DPP) Parent Survey

1. What benefits do you hope your child will receive by being enrolled in preschool?

Please select the **2 MOST IMPORTANT** benefits

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Develop the ability to interact with other children | <input type="checkbox"/> Be in a creative environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Develop the ability to interact with adults | <input type="checkbox"/> Experience challenge or a broader range of activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learn academic fundamentals | <input type="checkbox"/> Identify developmental issues |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

2. Parents may have many reasons for enrolling their child in a particular preschool.

Please select the **2 MOST IMPORTANT** factors that you considered as you selected a preschool for your child.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Convenient location | <input type="checkbox"/> Impression during site visit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cost of tuition | <input type="checkbox"/> Particular curriculum or philosophy: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reputation of quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hours of operation/schedule | |

a. If you selected 'Reputation of quality' in question #2, which of the following did you use to determine preschool reputation? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Qualistar rating
- ☐ Accreditation status (National Association for the Education of Young Children- NAEYC)
- ☐ Personal recommendation(s)
- ☐ Perception of quality in the broader community
- ☐ Other: _____

3. Do you know the Qualistar rating of the preschool where your child is enrolled? (circle one)

Yes, I know it

No, I don't know it

4. Does the preschool where your child is enrolled have NAEYC accreditation? (circle one)

Yes

No

I don't know

5. Did you visit this particular preschool before making an enrollment decision? (circle one)

Yes

No

a. If yes to question #5, please select the **4 MOST IMPORTANT qualities that you looked for when you visited the preschool and rank them from 1 to 4 (1= Most Important)**

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1) Friendly and knowledgeable leadership | _____ |
| 2) Qualified teachers (e.g., experienced, well-educated) | _____ |
| 3) Positive Interactions between students and teachers | _____ |
| 4) High quality facility, materials, and/or equipment | _____ |
| 5) Safety | _____ |
| 6) Substantial parent involvement | _____ |
| 7) Diversity | _____ |
| 8) Class size or student-to-staff ratio | _____ |
| 9) Other: _____ | _____ |

6. Please indicate whether the following statements are true for your family: (circle yes or no for each statement)

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| • Preschool enables parents (one or both) in this family to work | Yes | No |
| • Preschool enables parents (one or both) in this family to work longer hours | Yes | No |
| • Preschool enables parents (one or both) to attend school | Yes | No |
| • Preschool provides parents (one or both) with some free time | Yes | No |

7. How did you first hear about the Denver Preschool Program (DPP)? (select one)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DPP staff member | <input type="checkbox"/> Print media (newspaper, mail) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preschool staff member | <input type="checkbox"/> Broadcast media (radio, TV) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend/acquaintance | <input type="checkbox"/> Website: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family member | <input type="checkbox"/> Preschool Matters Ballot Initiative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employer: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> One of my other children participated in DPP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community presentations or literature
(at school/college, church, local event,
recreation center) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doctor's office/health clinic | <input type="checkbox"/> I do not recall |

8. What one source was the most useful for helping you enroll in the Denver Preschool Program (DPP)? (select one)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DPP staff member | <input type="checkbox"/> Website: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preschool staff member | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend/acquaintance | <input type="checkbox"/> I did not need any help |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family member | |

9. Did you apply to the Denver Preschool Program (DPP) directly or through Denver Public Schools (DPS)? (select one)

- ☐ Directly to the Denver Preschool Program (DPP)
☐ Through the Denver Public Schools (DPS)
☐ Both to DPP directly and through DPS independently

a. How easy was the application process to complete? (circle one)

Very difficult Very easy
1 2 3 4

b. Did you ask DPP for assistance as you completed the application process? (circle one)

Yes No

i. If yes to question #9b, how would you rate the assistance? (circle one)

Poor Excellent
1 2 3 4

c. After applying to DPP, how soon did you receive notification that your child was approved? (select one)

- ☐ Less than a week
☐ 1-2 weeks
☐ 3 weeks or more

Yes No

Yes No

☐ My child is now enrolled for more hours

☐ My child is now enrolled for fewer hours

Yes No

Yes No

Preschool/daycare name: _____

City: _____

Yes No

Yes No I don't know

- ☐ A single application for all programs
- ☐ Shared income documentation for all programs
- ☐ On-line application
- ☐ More transparency about how funding amounts are determined

17. How many children (under 18) reside in your household? _____

18. What language is primarily spoken in your home? (select one)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> English | <input type="checkbox"/> Korean |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish | <input type="checkbox"/> Somali |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arabic | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese | |

19. Do you have access to a computer with Internet? (circle one) Yes No

20. Do you regularly check an email account? (circle one) Yes No

21. If this survey was conducted online, would it be easier for you to complete? (circle one) Yes No

22. If you would be willing to participate in a follow-up survey in the future, please provide your email address and phone number.

Email address: _____

Phone #: _____

Thank you for completing the Denver Preschool Program Survey!

**Please use the pre-addressed stamped envelope to return the survey
or mail the survey to:**

Augenblick, Palaich and Associates
Attn: Kathryn Rooney
1120 Lincoln Street, Suite 1101
Denver, CO 80203

Your \$25 gift card will be sent to you when we receive your completed survey.

Please select which gift card you would prefer:

- ☐ King Soopers
- ☐ Safeway
- ☐ Target
- ☐ Walmart

Appendix B: 2009-10 Provider Survey

Denver Preschool Program (DPP) Provider Survey

1. Provider/agency name (e.g., DPS, Catholic Charities, Family Star): _____

2. Preschool site name and street address: _____

3. Your name: _____

4. Your work phone number: _____

5. Your work email address: _____

6. What is your current job title at the preschool site? _____

a. How long have you been employed in this position? _____

7. How would you characterize the preschool's curriculum? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Academic
☐ Montessori
☐ Play-based

- ☐ Arts-based
☐ Other: _____

8. Does your preschool maintain a waiting list? ☐ Yes ☐ No

a. If yes to question #8, how many children are on the waiting list?

- Infants and Toddlers (0-36 months) _____
- Preschool (3-5 years) _____

9. Was your preschool first approved by DPP within the previous 12 months? ☐ Yes ☐ No

a. If yes to question #9, why did your preschool opt to enroll in DPP? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Support for quality rating
☐ Free coaching support
☐ Professional development funds
☐ Financial assistance with materials & equipment

- ☐ DPP will improve access to preschool
☐ DPP will ease the financial burden on families
☐ This preschool site was enrolled by the provider (e.g., DPS, Catholic Charities, Family Star)
☐ Other: _____

b. If yes to question #9, did your preschool complete an application to enroll in DPP? ☐ Yes ☐ No

- i. If yes to question #9b, how easy was the application process? (circle one)
- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|------------------|
| <u>Very difficult</u> | | | | <u>Very easy</u> |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |

10. Has DPP affected your preschool's enrollment numbers? ☐ Yes ☐ No

a. If yes to question #10, please indicate the number of new children who enrolled or left as a result of DPP.

	<u># of new children</u>	<u># of children leaving</u>
• Infants and Toddlers (0-36 months)	_____	_____
• Preschool (3-5 years)	_____	_____

11. Has DPP affected your program's enrollment patterns (hours that children enroll)? ☐ Yes ☐ No

a. If yes to question #11, please indicate the number of children who have increased or decreased their hours of enrollment.

	<u># of children increasing hours</u>	<u># of children decreasing hours</u>
• Infants and Toddlers (0-36 months)	_____	_____
• Preschool (3-5 years)	_____	_____

12. How would you rate DPP's efforts to inform parents about the availability of tuition credits? (circle one)

<u>Poor</u>				<u>Excellent</u>
1	2	3	4	

13. How would you rate DPP's efforts to inform parents about its quality improvement process? (circle one)

<u>Poor</u>				<u>Excellent</u>
1	2	3	4	

14. Parents may have many reasons for enrolling their child in a particular preschool. Please select the 2 MOST IMPORTANT factors that you believe parents consider as they select a preschool for their child.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Convenient location | <input type="checkbox"/> Impression during site visit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cost of tuition | <input type="checkbox"/> Particular curriculum or philosophy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reputation of quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hours of operation/schedule | |

15. Which of the following do you believe parents use to determine a preschool's reputation? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Qualistar rating
- ☐ Accreditation status (National Association for the Education of Young Children- NAEYC)
- ☐ Personal recommendation(s)
- ☐ Perception of quality in the broader community
- ☐ Other: _____

16. How strongly do you agree with the following statement? "In general, parents can accurately determine preschool quality." (circle one)

<u>Strongly disagree</u>				<u>Strongly agree</u>
1	2	3	4	

17. Please select the 4 MOST IMPORTANT qualities that you believe parents look for during a preschool site visit and rank them from 1 to 4 (1= Most Important)

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1) Friendly and knowledgeable leadership | _____ |
| 2) Qualified teachers (e.g., experienced, well-educated) | _____ |
| 3) Positive interactions between students and teachers | _____ |
| 4) High quality facility, materials, and/or equipment | _____ |
| 5) Safety | _____ |
| 6) Substantial parent involvement | _____ |
| 7) Diversity | _____ |
| 8) Class size or student-to-staff ratio | _____ |
| 9) Other: _____ | _____ |

18. Has your preschool recruited parents to apply for the DPP tuition credits?

☐ Yes ☐ No

a. If yes to question #18, what parent recruitment activities has the preschool engaged in? (select all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion at parent meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual assistance for parents with applications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Distribution of printed information on-site | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual encouragement for parents to apply | |

b. If yes to question #18, since the beginning of this school year, how much time has your preschool staff spent per month recruiting parents to apply to DPP? (select one)

- ☐ 0-5 hours
☐ 6 -10 hours
☐ 11-15 hours
☐ More than 15 hours

19. How much time does your preschool staff spend per month completing DPP attendance paperwork? (select one)

- ☐ 0-5 hours
☐ 6 -10 hours
☐ 11-15 hours
☐ More than 15 hours

20. From your perspective, how smoothly do you think the DPP enrollment process works for parents? (circle one)

<u>Not smoothly</u>			<u>Very smoothly</u>
1	2	3	4

21. How smoothly is the DPP tuition credit payment process working for your preschool? (circle one)

<u>Not smoothly</u>			<u>Very smoothly</u>
1	2	3	4

22. Does the preschool receive the DPP tuition credits in a timely manner? (circle one)

<u>Rarely</u>			<u>Always</u>
1	2	3	4

23. How comfortable do you feel explaining to parents how DPP tuition credit amounts are determined? (circle one)

<u>Not comfortable</u>			<u>Very comfortable</u>
1	2	3	4

24. Have you asked for any administrative assistance from DPP?

☐ Yes ☐ No

a. If yes to question #24, what type of assistance did you request?

b. If yes to question #24, how useful was the assistance? (circle one)

<u>Not useful</u>			<u>Very useful</u>
1	2	3	4

25. Did your preschool participate in the DPP quality improvement process?

☐ Yes ☐ No

a. If yes to question #25, which component of DPP's quality improvement process was the most helpful for improving the quality of your preschool? (select one)

- ☐ Professional development funds
☐ Free coaching support
☐ Financial assistance with materials & equipment
☐ Support for quality rating

26. Has your preschool participated previously in a quality improvement process (outside of DPP)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

a. If yes to question #26, how long did the preschool participate? (select one)

- ☐ Less than a year
☐ 1-2 years
☐ 3-5 years
☐ More than 5 years

b. If yes to question #26, who sponsored the quality improvement process? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Denver Early Childhood Council ☐ Mayor's Office for Education and Children
☐ Mile High United Way ☐ Other: _____
☐ Buell Foundation ☐ I don't know
☐ School Readiness (House Bill 1238)

27. Has your preschool staff received any coaching from DPP?

☐ Yes ☐ No

a. If yes to question #27, how beneficial was the coaching? (circle one)

Not beneficial Very beneficial
1 2 3 4

28. Do you believe the most recent quality ratings that your preschool received to be accurate assessments of the preschool's quality?

- Qualistar
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable

a. If your preschool has a Qualistar rating, please explain why you believe the rating was or was not an accurate assessment of the preschool's quality.

29. To what extent has the presence of DPP encouraged you to improve the quality of your preschool program? (circle one)

Not at all To a great extent
1 2 3 4

30. Has your preschool made any significant changes as a result of participating in DPP?

☐ Yes ☐ No

a. If yes to question #30, what types of changes have been made? (select all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increased number of staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Modified curriculum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increased number of infant/toddler classrooms | <input type="checkbox"/> Modified professional development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increased number of preschool classrooms | <input type="checkbox"/> Modified hiring standards |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increased hours of operation | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decreased number of staff | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decreased number of infant/toddler classrooms | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decreased number of preschool classrooms | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decreased hours of operation | |

31. What is your biggest operational concern about DPP? (select one)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No operational concerns | <input type="checkbox"/> The time/effort to prepare for the rating process |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The time/effort to recruit parents | <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness/accuracy of the rating process |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The time/effort to manage the tuition credit process | <input type="checkbox"/> The time/effort for parents to enroll in DPP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The time/effort to track attendance | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

32. What is your biggest policy concern about DPP? (select one)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No policy concerns | <input type="checkbox"/> DPP may affect the preschool marketplace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DPP may draw attention away from 0-3 education | <input type="checkbox"/> There is a lack of public awareness about DPP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parents may transfer their child for the final year of preschool | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

33. How effectively does DPP work for the families it serves?
(circle one)

<u>Not effectively</u>			<u>Very effectively</u>
1	2	3	4

34. How effectively does DPP work for families whose primary language is not English? (circle one)

<u>Not effectively</u>			<u>Very effectively</u>
1	2	3	4

35. Do you have any suggestions for improving DPP in the future?

**Please use the pre-addressed stamped envelope to return the survey
or mail the survey to:**

Augenblick, Palaich and Associates
Attn: Kathryn Rooney
1120 Lincoln Street, Suite 1101
Denver, CO 80203

**Your \$25 gift card will be sent to you when we receive your completed survey.
Please select which gift card you would prefer:**

- ☐ The Bookies (Denver Bookstore)
- ☐ Lakeshore Learning (Littleton Educational Products Store)

Thank you for completing the Denver Preschool Program Survey!

Appendix C: Data Collection Methods

During the first 14 months of the Denver Preschool Program (DPP), beginning in November 2006, the project's emphasis was on building the administrative and operational structure of the program. Staff and contractors were hired and worked together to develop procedures for processing parent and preschool applications to participate in the program.

In the first-year 2007-2008, the number of enrolled providers was limited and the first sites were not approved until early in 2008. As a consequence, families receiving tuition credits were concentrated in a relatively small number of DPP-approved sites. For these reasons, in the 2007-08 year, APA modified its procedures for collecting information and relied on face-to-face meetings, telephone interviews, and small focus groups of parents and providers.

DPP's "second school year," from August 1, 2008, through June 31, 2009, the evaluation team was able to gather data about the program from the full range of parent and provider sources, relying more heavily on surveys and less on face-to-face focus group meetings and telephone interviews with parents and providers.

The 2008-09 data collection activities were continued into the 2009-10 school year. APA collected a second year of survey data that can be used to monitor the progress and changes from the 2008-09 school year. Next year, the 2010-11 school year, three years of survey data will allow APA to present trend in the survey results. For the purpose of presenting the data, the 2007-08 school year will be referred to as 2008; the 2008-09 school year will be referred to as 2009; and the 2009-10 school year will be referred to as 2010.

Tables C1 and C2 document the approaches and sources of information used to collect data in the 2010 year. Information was obtained from focus groups, surveys, in-person and telephone interviews, and analysis of assessments and DPP data. A focus group was conducted for Spanish-language parents who had a child not enrolled in DPP. The purpose of this focus group was to ascertain the parents' knowledge of and feelings towards DPP. The evaluation team also analyzed 163 completed surveys from a sample of parents and 50 completed surveys from a sample of DPS, community-based, and home-based preschools. A description of these samples is provided below.

In-person interviews were conducted with three DPP board members, four DPP staff and the lead staff of all DPP partners. The evaluation team also interviewed ten home-based preschools that were in various stages of engaging with DPP. For home-based preschools that chose not to participate in DPP, the interviewees noted several reasons for not participating: perceived difficulty in joining DPP; concerns about the time needed to pursue the application process; and questions about what advantage there might be in joining DPP when the home preschool did not have any children in the year before kindergarten.

A review of the last two columns of Table C2 indicates that the number of children in the program who were assessed by Clayton Early Learning Institute was 200 students, and the number of children records processed by ACS rose to approximately 6,000 in 2009-10.

Table C1

Approaches Used to Answer DPP Evaluation Questions in 2010														
			Focus Groups								Surveys			
			Parents						Coaches		DPP Participants			
			Child in DPP, Receiving TC		Child in DPP, Not Receiving TC		Child Not in DPP (Latina/o)		Coaches and Supervisors		Parents		Preschools	
# Targeted	# Participated		0	0	0	0	10	9	0	0	200	163	60	50
Policy Issues	Parents/ Families	A.1.					X		X		X			
		A.2.					X		X		X			
		A.3.					X		X		X		X	
	Quality and Providers	B.1.							X					
		B.2.							X					
		B.3.							X				X	
		B.4.							X					
	Child Outcomes	C.1.												
		C.2.												
		C.3.												
		C.4.												
		C.5.												
Operational Issues	Outreach	D.1.					X		X		X		X	
		D.2.					X		X				X	
	Tuition Credits	E.1.					X		X		X		X	
		E.2.							X				X	
		E.3.							X				X	
	Other Funding	F.1.							X		X			
		F.2.							X		X			
		F.3.							X					

Table C2

Additional Approaches Used to Answer DPP Evaluation Questions in 2010																	
			Interviews											Data Analysis			
			In-Person				Phone							Assessments		DPP Data	
			Staff / Board		DPS Leaders and DPP Partners		Parents with Child in DPP, Receiving TC		Parents with Child at a DPP site, not receiving TC		Home Provider Non DPP		Community Provider Non DPP		Child Outcomes in DPP		Families, Providers
# Targeted	# Participating		6	6	8	8	0	0	0	0	10	10	0	0	200	200	5921
Policy Issues	Parents/ Families	A.1.			X				X		X		X				X
		A.2.			X				X								X
		A.3.			X				X								X
		A.4.			X				X								X
	Quality and Providers	B.1.	X		X						X		X				X
		B.2.	X		X						X		X				X
		B.3.	X		X						X		X				X
		B.4.	X		X						X		X				X
	Child Outcomes	C.1.													N/A		
		C.2.													N/A		
		C.3.													N/A		
		C.4.													N/A		
		C.5.													N/A		
Operational Issues	Outreach	D.1.			X				X		X		X				
		D.2.			X				X								
		D.3.	X		X				X		X		X				
	Tuition Credits	E.1.			X						X		X				
		E.2.			X						X		X				
		E.3.	X		X						X		X				
		E.4.	X		X						X		X				
	Other Funding	F.1.			X												
		F.2.			X						X		X		X		
		F.3.			X						X		X		X		
		F.4.	X		X						X		X		X		

The evaluation data collected and analyzed in 2009-10 can be characterized as follows:

- The parent survey results are representative of the opinions of families that participate in DPP.
- The provider survey results are representative of the opinions of providers that participate in DPP.
- The student assessment sample is now drawn in a scientific manner from the families that were participating in DPP in mid-August 2009.

Appendix D: Description of the Sample of Families and Providers

Description of Family Sample

DPP enrolls children on a year-round cycle, and thus the number and demographics of DPP children are constantly changing. The data presented in this section represents children enrolled in DPP as of October 16th 2009, which is when the sample of families to be surveyed was drawn. For an explanation of how particular descriptions were coded into categories such as ethnicity, see Appendix A.

Table D1 portrays the breakdown of children by ethnic and family income tier. As in 2008-09, approximately half of the children enrolled in DPP were Hispanic. Slightly more than half of DPP families reported incomes of \$47,000 or below; and less than 30 percent of families did not report income.

Table D1

All 2010 DPP Families by Income Tier and Child's Ethnicity*						
Child's Ethnicity	Income Tier					Total
	Tier 1: Up to \$21,200	Tier 2: \$21,201- \$47,700	Tier 3: \$47,701- \$72,080	Tier 4: More than \$72,080	Not Reported	
Black	392	188	35	16	130	761
Hispanic	1477	834	95	35	553	2,994
White	197	223	160	313	685	1,578
Other	214	140	49	42	127	572
Not Reported	23	18	3	3	282	329
Total	2,303	1,403	342	409	1,777	6,234

* Numbers reported by ACS in mid-October, 2009. Numbers exclude those enrolled in DPP after October 16, 2009.

The 2010 survey sample was drawn from the population described in Table D1. APA sent surveys to all of the parents of the children who were assessed by Clayton Early Learning as part of the child outcomes study. In addition, APA sent surveys to a supplemental sample of 10 additional parents. This supplemental parent sample was selected to be representative of parents with children in preschools with Qualistar ratings of 1 or 2 stars. By adding these 10 parents to the surveyed total, the sample was representative of the population by income, child's ethnicity, home language, and the Qualistar ratings of preschools where the children were enrolled.

In 2010, APA sent surveys to a total of 210 parents, and received 163 completed surveys from these *parents*. This was a better response rate than the 2009 response rate, 78%, as compared to 69%. The sample of 163 responding parents presented in Table D2 is representative of the ethnic and income demographics found in the entire DPP parent population.

Table D2

2010 Returned DPP Surveys by Income Tier and Child's Ethnicity						
Child's Ethnicity	Income Tier					
	Tier 1: Up to \$21,200	Tier 2: \$21,201-\$47,700	Tier 3: \$47,701-\$72,080	Tier 4: More than \$72,080	Not Reported	Total
Black	12	8	1	1	1	23
Hispanic	31	24	3	1	4	63
White	4	9	6	18	21	58
Other	5	4	2	3	5	19
Not Reported	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	52	45	12	23	31	163

Description of Provider Sample

DPP continues to recruit and enroll preschool providers on an ongoing basis. The data presented in this section represents preschools that were enrolled in DPP as of October 16, 2009, at which time the sample of providers to be surveyed was drawn.

Table D3 categorizes these preschool sites by type of provider, total number of classrooms, and star rating. DPS preschools represent 33% of all DPP preschool sites. Of the non-DPS (community) sites, 14% were family-based and the rest were center-based sites. This represents an increase of 6% from 2009 in the proportion of community sites that are home-based. However, fewer than half of the home-sites actually had at least one DPP child enrolled in 2010. As in 2009, approximately 80% of the preschool sites had between one and five classrooms. Approximately 27% of DPP sites in 2010 did not have a star rating. This percent is down about 4% from the previous year. Among the sites that were rated, 62% had earned a three-star rating and 16% earned a rating of one- or two-stars.

Table D3

2010- All DPP Preschool Sites*	
Provider Type	#
DPS	86
Community Center-Based Sites	150
Community Home-Based Sites	25 (12 with 1 or more children enrolled)
Total Number of Classrooms	#
1 or 2 classrooms	114
3-5 classrooms	92
6-9 classrooms	41
10 or more classrooms	12
Star Rating	#
1 or 2 stars	31
3 stars	118
4 stars	41
Scheduled or In-Process	27
Provisional	3
Intro to Quality	41
Grand Total	261

* Numbers exclude those preschool sites that enrolled or dropped out of DPP after October 16, 2009.

The preschool survey sample was drawn from the distribution of preschools described in Table D3. This sample was stratified according to provider type, number of total classrooms, star ratings, and location (zip code). APA intentionally oversampled home-based community preschools and preschools with a rating of 1 or 2 stars. In October 2009, there were 10 providers enrolled in DPP that managed more than one preschool site. These included DPS, Mile High Montessori, Catholic Charities and Family Star. APA surveyed at least one preschool site within each of these 10 providers.

Of the 60 preschools surveyed, 50 returned surveys, for a response rate of 83%. This was virtually identical to the response rate in 2009. Both the surveyed preschools and the preschools that returned surveys were representative of the overall population of DPP preschools. Table D4 presents the distribution of preschools that returned surveys.

Table D4

2010 All Returned Surveys	
Provider Type	#
DPS	10
Community Center-Based Sites	32
Community Family-Based Sites	8
Total Number of Classrooms	#
1 or 2 classrooms	18
3-5 classrooms	20
6-9 classrooms	9
10 or more classrooms	3
Star Rating	#
1 or 2 stars	8
3 stars	22
4 stars	7
Scheduled or In-Process	3
Provisional	0
Intro to Quality	10
Total	50

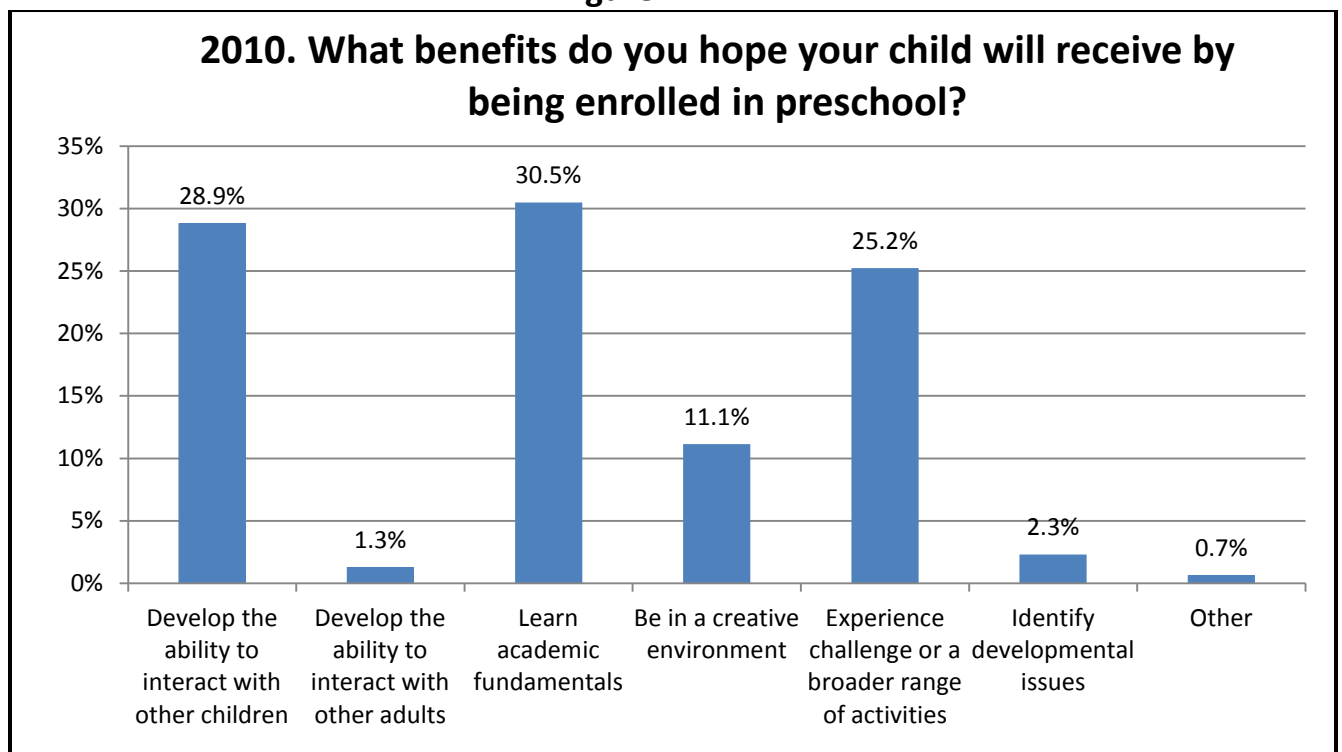
Appendix E: Reasons Parents and Preschools Participate in DPP⁷

Why Parents Enrolled in DPP

Parents enroll their children in preschool for a variety of reasons. An understanding of these reasons can help in the formulation of outreach efforts. The surveys conducted by APA asked parents to select the top two benefits that they hoped that their child would receive by being enrolled in preschool.

As Figure E1 shows, the following three benefits were more likely to be important to parents: learn academic fundamentals, develop the ability to interact with other children, and experience challenge or a broader range of activities. The 2010 patterns are similar to the 2009 results.

Figure E1



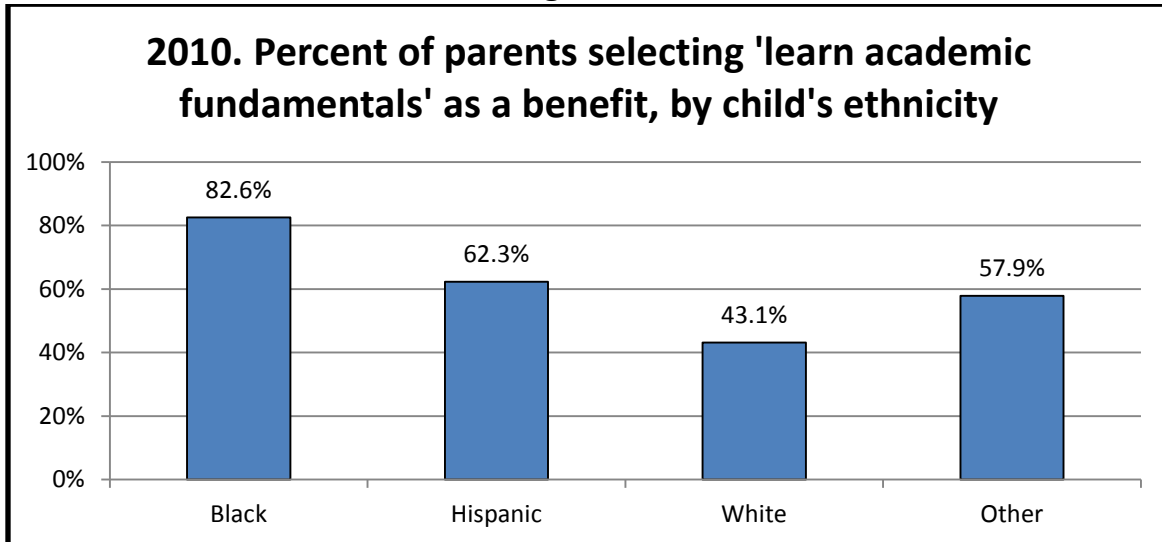
By Gender, Ethnicity and Attendance Status

These results varied by the child's gender, attendance status, ethnicity, or the star rating of the enrolled preschool. For example, parents of female children were more likely to select 'develop the ability to interact with other children' as a benefit than parents of male children (64.7% vs. 43.4%). Parents of female children were also less likely to select 'experience challenge or a broader range of activities' as a benefit than parents of male children (40.0% vs. 56.6%).

⁷ For the purpose of presenting the survey data, the 2007-08 school year will be referred to as 2008; the 2008-09 school year will be referred to as 2009, and the 2009-10 school year will be referred to as 2010.

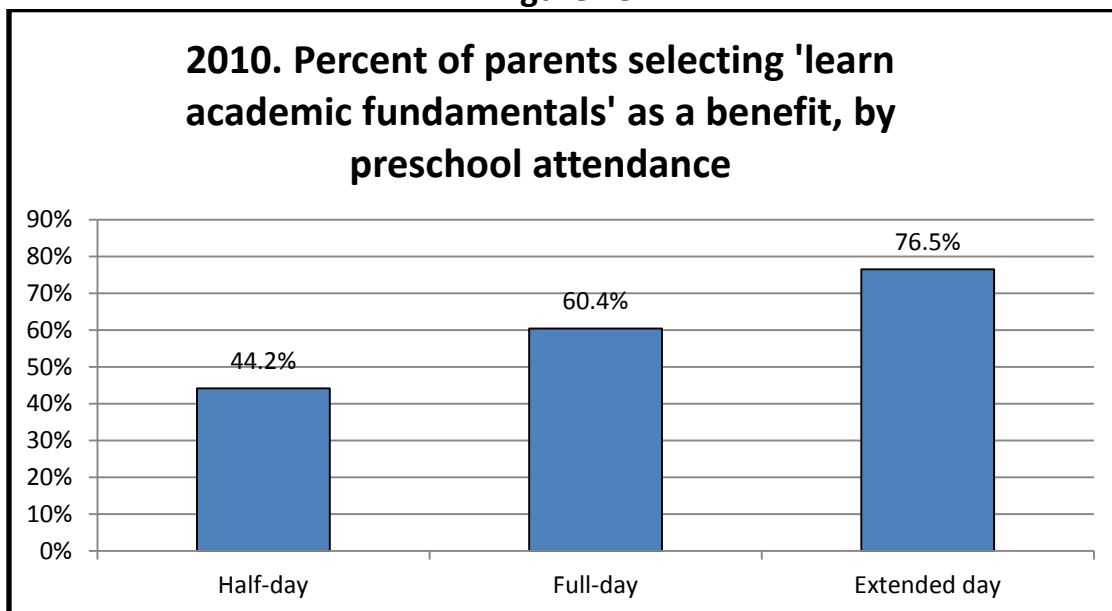
As shown in Figure E2 below, parents of black students were the most likely to select 'learn academic fundamentals' as a benefit while parents of white students were the least likely to select this benefit.

Figure E2



As shown in Figure E3, the more hours a day the students were enrolled in preschool, the more likely parents were to select 'learn academic fundamentals' as a benefit.

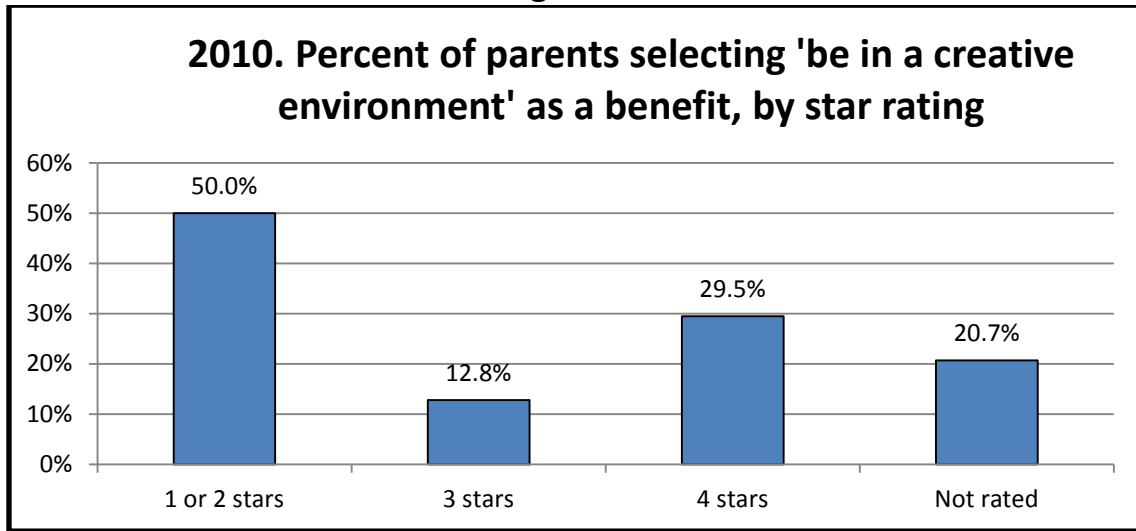
Figure E3



By Type of Preschool

Parents who enrolled their child in a 1 or 2 star rated preschool were much more likely than their peers to select 'be in a creative environment' as a benefit of preschool. This result is shown in Figure E4.

Figure E4

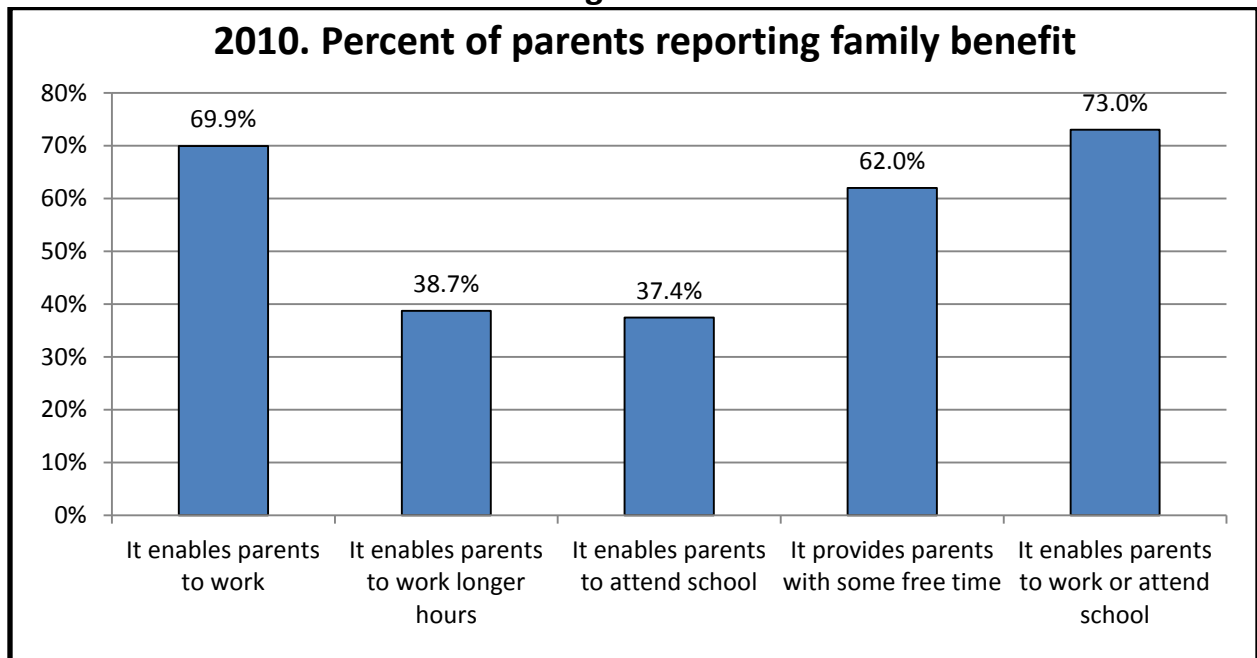


Benefit to Parent

The survey also asked parents to indicate whether preschool provided one or both parents in the family with a series of opportunities.

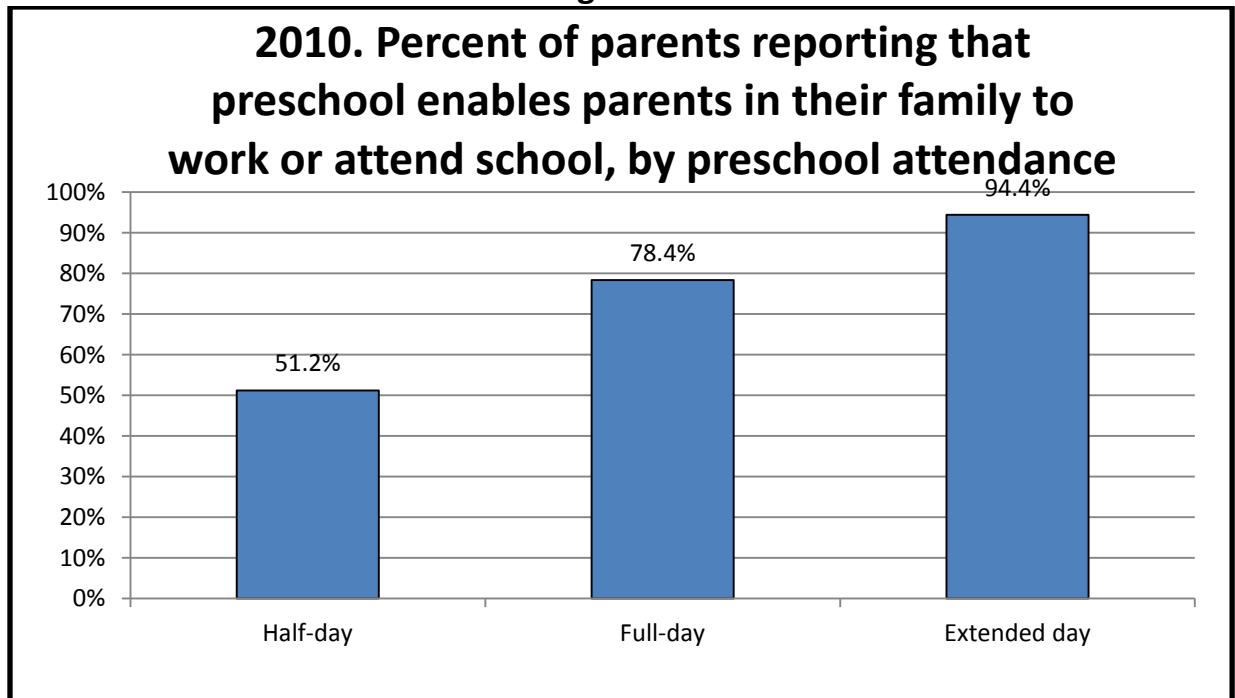
The results in Figure E5 show that parents feel that preschool can be very helpful to them. Nearly 70% of parents indicated that preschool enabled them to work, and almost two-thirds of parents reported that preschool provided them with some free time. More than a third of parents reported that preschool enabled them to attend school. These results are nearly identical to the 2009 results.

Figure E5



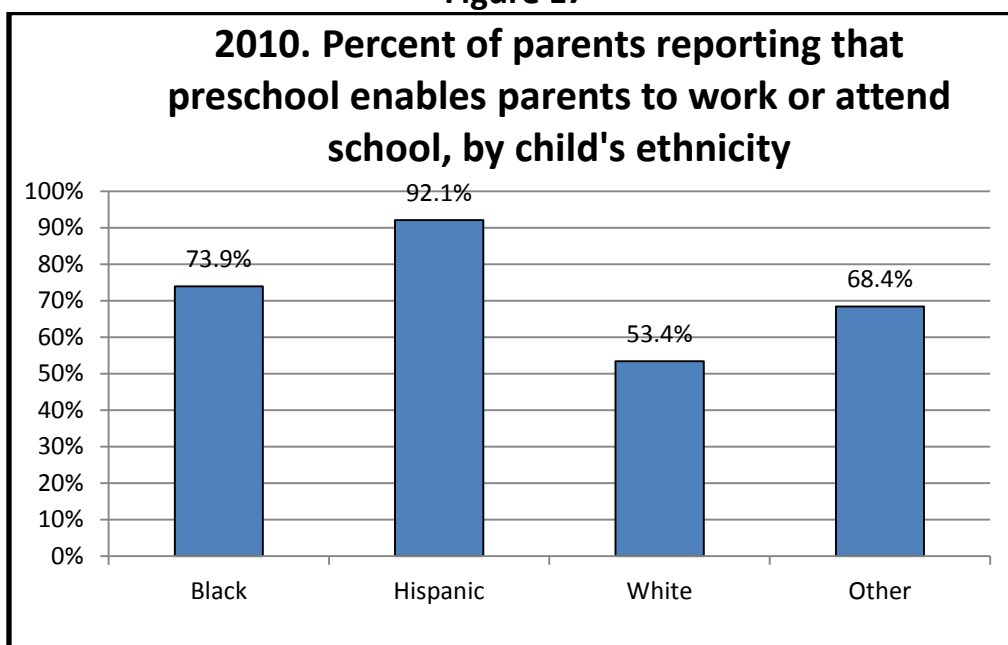
The percent of parents reporting particular benefits varied significantly by a child's attendance status. Figure E6 shows that parents with children enrolled in full-day or extended day preschool were much more likely to report that preschool enabled them to work or to attend school than parents whose children were enrolled in half-day preschool.

Figure E6



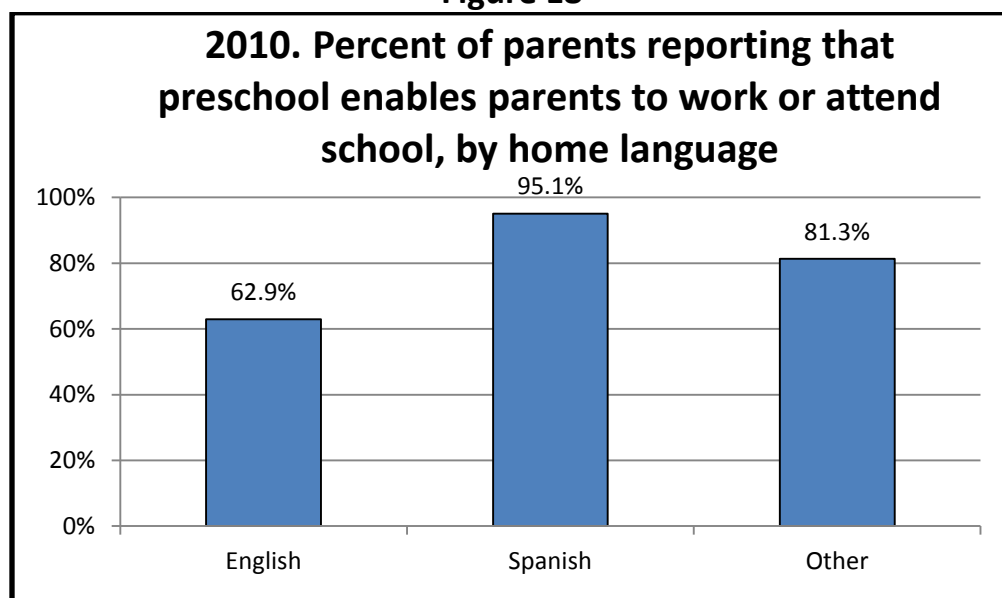
There were also differences in parent responses to these questions by child ethnicity, home language, and family income tier. Figure E7 shows that parents of Hispanic children were more likely to report that preschool enabled them to work or attend school while parents of white children were less likely to report these benefits.

Figure E7



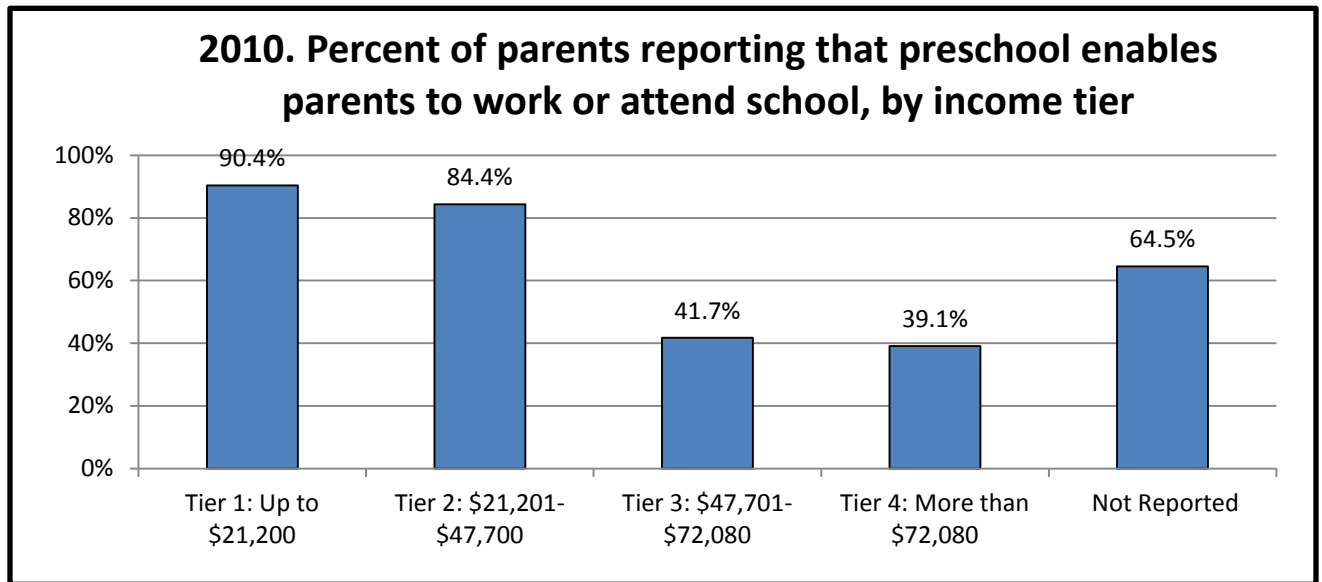
As Figure E8 shows, Spanish-speaking families were much more likely than English-speaking families or those speaking another language to report that preschool enabled them to work or attend school.

Figure E8



Families with lower incomes were more likely than families with higher incomes to report that preschool enabled them to work or attend school, see Figure E9.

Figure E9



Overall, these disaggregated 2010 results are similar to the results from 2009.

Why Preschools Enrolled in DPP

Understanding why preschools choose to enroll in DPP is important in attracting more preschools to participate in the program. The surveys asked preschools to select from a list and/or write in the reasons that they chose to enroll in DPP. On average preschools listed more than four options. These survey results reveal that there are various reasons that preschools enroll in DPP. As Table E10 shows, the two most common reasons given for enrolling were the belief that DPP would ease the financial burden on families and the availability of the DPP professional development funds. Other important reasons for enrolling were the availability of financial assistance with materials and equipment and the availability of support for the quality rating process.

The provider survey results for 2010 results are similar to the 2009 results. The only notable change from 2009 was a 4% decrease in the percent of preschools selecting 'DPP will improve access to preschool'.

Table E10

2010. Why did your preschool opt to enroll in DPP?		
Reason for Enrolling	%	#
DPP will ease the financial burden on families	19.4%	28
Professional development funds	18.8%	27
Financial assistance with materials and equipment	16.7%	24
Support for quality rating	16.7%	24
DPP will improve access to preschool	11.8%	17
Free coaching support	11.1%	16
This preschool site was enrolled by the provider	4.9%	7
Other	0.7%	1

Appendix F: Summary of Interviews with Home-Based Providers not in DPP

Introduction

The goal of the evaluators was to interview home-based providers in the southwest region of Denver who have not enrolled in DPP. Providers were selected from the Qualistar database of providers who had been identified as potential DPP approved providers. This yielded 13 potential providers, ten of whom were interviewed.

The ten providers interviewed were not yet enrolled in DPP; however, they were at various stages of enrollment and included three who had not applied to DPP and had not participated in any Qualistar related meetings, three who had applied to DPP and had participated in a Qualistar introductory meeting and four who had applied to DPP and were engaged in the Qualistar rating process. To gauge the understanding and perceptions of DPP held by these providers, we asked the following questions:

- Describe your preschool
 - What is the mission of your school?
 - What is your enrollment?
- Over the past two years have you noticed any change in the quality of preschool programs in the Denver area? In what ways?
 - What factors do you think contributed to this change?
- How has the marketplace changed over the past few years?
- What administrative challenges do you face in running your preschool?
- What are your experiences working with subsidy programs?
- Describe the Denver Preschool Program.
 - What is your understanding of the tuition credits?
 - What is your understanding of the quality improvement strategies?
- Have you considered applying to DPP?
 - Why did you choose not to do so?
- What could DPP do to attract more preschool providers?

Conversation Highlights

Preschool providers not enrolled in DPP as of April 2010 were no less passionate about early education than their DPP counterparts. However, they did wonder how DPP might benefit them and their families. Interested providers also had questions concerning whether and when to enroll in DPP, since it is not unusual for them not to have a DPP eligible four-year old currently enrolled.

The providers were very interested in the DPP program and expressed a desire to enroll. All providers the evaluators talked with had concerns about DPP's effect on the home-based care marketplace; specifically they were concerned that the number of four-year olds in their home-based programs had decreased. They attributed this decrease to more families sending their four year old children to their local school rather than enrolling the child in a home-based program. All of the providers expressed

strong concerns that families think that schools are the best places to prepare for kindergarten even though, due to the low student to adult ratio, some children thrive in the home-based setting.

Detailed Summary of Individual Interviews

Describe your preschool. The providers we talked to operated schools that had simple education philosophies, usually a play-based model that allowed the home provider to work with children ages zero to four. When the providers had older students, they had a curriculum to enable their older children to be ready for school.

One provider stated that since initiating the preschool component of her childcare center, she had been pleased with the results, and enjoyed engaging the children in school preparatory activities. If she had not become interested in DPP, she would not have offered these services. Further, while she initiated her preschool services for one specific child, all of the children in her home had been able to engage in and benefit from the preschool work. Another provider stated, “I have learned a lot about what is quality daycare.”

All of the providers interviewed were operating at near full capacity, which, depending upon the provider, ranged from four to ten children. All of the providers recruited by word of mouth. One provider knew that she was listed with the childcare Resource and Referral agency. Several identified their niche in the Spanish-speaking community.

Over the past two years have you noticed any change in the quality of preschool programs in the Denver area? In what ways? All of the providers noticed a shift in how the families they worked with thought about preschool; the families went from thinking of preschool as daycare to thinking of preschool as an educational program for children. All had families move their four-year olds out of home-based care and into their neighborhood schools. “The public schools are getting the four-year olds,” one respondent stated. However, another respondent indicated, “... I am at my center most of the time so I don’t really know what is happening out there.”

One provider believed that the quality of preschool programs in Denver was improving as a result of DPP, but didn’t think that very many Spanish-speaking childcare providers were pursuing DPP as an option. Her assessment was that, “[t]here is a lot of fear on behalf of Spanish speakers who want to join” due to the paperwork requirements.

What factors do you think contributed to this change? One provider stated that she thought that the change in quality of preschool programs occurred because of the money that was available to school- and center-based providers. Another provider cited the ballot initiative (Preschool Matters) campaign specifically as the source of the change.

What administrative challenges do you face in running your preschool? Having enough time to do the paperwork and other related administrative tasks is cited as the biggest challenge of running home-based programs. Some providers also worked with other subsidy programs and thought that the paperwork associated with those programs presented challenges. Some providers work mostly with middle-class families and do not seek families that need subsidies or work with the subsidy programs.

One provider indicated that one of her greatest challenges was getting parents to honor their contracts. Despite the fact that the contract that parents signed at the time they enrolled a child in her program required that the parents pay for the provider's sick leave and vacation, "[m]any times parents don't want to pay sick leave or vacation for me. I accrue 5 days a year for sick time and 2 weeks a year for vacation. Not everyone likes when this happens."

Describe the Denver Preschool Program. The providers we spoke with often confused DPP and the Qualistar process. They did not distinguish between DPP and Qualistar and thought that the coaches were provided by Qualistar. Since DPP requires participation in the Qualistar quality rating process, this confusion is understandable. Some providers chose not to enroll as a DPP provider because the Qualistar process was too cumbersome and too expensive. One respondent stated that she, "[t]hought it [Preschool Matters] was going to be a lot different."

What is your understanding of the tuition credits? The providers had very mixed understandings of the tuition credits. Some knew that the amount of the credits were determined based on the parent's income, while others knew that the amount of the credits were related to the quality rating. No respondents mentioned the amount of the credit being adjusted based on either the number of hours a day a student attended or the size of the student's family.

What is your understanding of the quality improvement strategies? Among the providers there was a limited understanding of the quality improvement process. Most knew that they needed to be rated by Qualistar to be a DPP provider. Of the respondents who had not engaged in the Qualistar process, some providers knew about the availability of coaching and some had heard about the money available for materials.

Have you considered applying to DPP? Why did you choose not to do so? All of the providers had thought about applying to DPP. The reasons given for not applying included the cost, the time and the fact that they did not have a four-year old in their program. One of the reasons for moving forward with an application to DPP was a desire to make their programs better for the children.

Conclusions

Working with home-based providers has been a challenge for DPP. Because DPS and larger community center-based providers have the potential to enroll far more children than do home-based providers, DPP, with a relatively small administrative staff, has focused its efforts on these larger classrooms.

However, focusing more on the home- providers could serve both DPP and the early education community well. Early learning that is so crucial to school readiness begins in the early years with children aged zero to three. Home-based providers who participate in DPP and become Qualistar rated are enhancing and improving the environment for all of the children cared for in their home, including the children who are not yet four years old.

During these ten interviews, a number of recommendations regarding how DPP could improve were offered. One provider suggested that DPP help home-based providers recruit preschool students. As

previously noted, providers expressed concerns that parents tended to be biased towards school based programs and overlook the more favorable child to adult ratios of home care. One idea offered to address this concern was that DPP offer sessions to parents of four year olds to let them know about the different types of preschools and help the parents to determine which type of preschool would be best for their child. This would require participation and engagement by the parents.

The interviews conducted with providers that serve largely Spanish-speaking families resulted in more specific recommendations about services. One respondent suggested that more DPP information be available in Spanish. This provider also suggested that training sessions for potential DPP providers be conducted in Spanish in a separate room so that Spanish speakers could fully participate and get the full breadth of what is going on. While there is currently an interpreter present at trainings conducted in English, too much gets lost in translation, and Spanish-speakers struggle to participate in an English dominant environment. This type of training would improve the experience for the providers, improve the quality and caliber of education they offer their preschoolers and improve the information about DPP that they can share with interested parents.

Finally, a provider suggested that banners for DPP be available in Spanish or at least include the phrase, “Se habla español.”

Appendix G: Summary of Spanish Language Parent Focus Group

On May 18, 2010 Sixth Sun Consulting conducted a focus group for APA of Spanish-speaking parents whose preschool aged children attended the Barnum/Colores Head Start Program, a non-DPP approved Program. Nine parents participated in the focus group.

Highlights:

- Only one of the parents who participated in this focus group had heard of the Denver Preschool Program. When compared to the 2008 and 2009 non DPP-site focus groups, this is the lowest instance of familiarity with DPP. Once the parents were familiarized with DPP, without prompting or encouragement from the facilitators, eight out of the nine participants requested that information about DPP be e-mailed to them.
- The majority of participants had only heard of Head Start preschool programs. Initial referrals to Head Start came from friends, family members, neighbors, and Head Start service providers.
- As indicated in the other non-DPP approved Spanish-speaking focus groups, parents identified word of mouth and personal relationships as the most effective means of advertising DPP. Participants suggested that DPP engage parents who have or have had children in DPP programs in spreading the word to neighbors, family members, and friends.
- Suggested outreach methods to Spanish-speaking communities using media include the following:
 - post and distribute fliers throughout Spanish-speaking neighborhoods;
 - show commercials during telenovelas (Spanish language soap operas);
 - seek out more coverage on Univision and other news programs; and
 - advertise on the radio in the evening and via radio news programs.
- Parents suggested that DPP develop a relationship with DPS, and distribute information about DPP through school bulletins and fliers. They also suggested that DPP negotiate with DPS schools to host DPP information sessions. This recommendation echoes sentiment heard in the 2009 focus group.
- Financial support should be the first point that is emphasized in any information or publicity about DPP.

Why did you enroll your child in preschool?

Six parents responded to this question with six different answers as follow:

- One parent said she wished to prepare her child for school, expose them to other children, and socialize them;
- Another parent said she wanted her child to learn independence, including how to eat properly, wash their hands, etc;
- Another participant wanted her shy child to be able to better interact with the world;

- Another parent said that her child had difficulty speaking, and has done much better learning the language, following the rules, and behaving properly as a result of the program;
- Still another parent said that she wanted her child to learn how to share and get along with other children; and
- One participant indicated that her child is an only child, and really needed to be with other children.

What are the main factors that influenced your decision to enroll in your preschool?

All of the parents who responded to this question chose the Barnum/Colores Head Start Program based upon either their relationship with someone who had recommended the site, or on their personal experiences at the site. One participant said that she likes how the teachers treat the children with respect, and take time to explain things to the parents. Because of this respect and quality communication, she has placed all of her children in the Barnum/Colores Head Start Program. She said that she will continue to come back to this site, and is also very grateful that they accept children at four years of age. Another said that a neighbor had suggested the program. Still another parent said that she had previously cared for a child who went to Barnum/Colores; and she was so impressed with the child's growth that she enrolled her own daughter into the program when she reached preschool age.

How important was your relationship with the program's staff and the location of the site to your decision?

While none of the parents indicated that relationships with the program's staff or the site's location were the primary factors in their selection process, all of the focus group participants spoke of the importance of program staff. Some emphasized their kindness, while others spoke of how staff members effectively motivated both the preschool children and their parents.

While it was not explicitly mentioned during the focus group, Sixth Sun consultants observed that all of the parents lived within a few blocks of the site. Surveys also listed location as a key reason for choosing the Barnum/Colores site.

Aside from program staff and location, one parent said that the Head Start programs are more affordable than most. She also found the Head Start application process to be helpful, because it informed parents of other resources and government assistance that they might be able to access. Other parents also expressed an appreciation for this.

Head Start's offerings for parents, including parenting classes, were also mentioned as important. One parent indicated that she found the parenting classes to be extremely useful and that she learned better techniques for raising her children. All of the participants expressed appreciation that these Head Start classes are free. One participant mentioned that Head Start would be offering an English class at the Barnum/Colores site soon. It was clear through body language and head nodding that the participants who did not speak also found these classes to be an important and valuable offering. The classes are

viewed as practical and helpful and also focus on the entire family. Preschool is not just about the education and socialization of the child, but rather something that must be extended to the child's family as a whole.

**How did you determine the quality of the preschool program your child attends?
What is the quality of education at the program your child attends?**

Parents spoke highly of the quality of education their children were receiving. They identified the following things as indicators of a high quality education:

- Teachers having a lot of patience with the children;
- Teachers keeping parents fully up to date on how their child is doing, what they have learned, and what they still need to work on;
- Children learning how to write their names;
- Children knowing how to count and put numbers in order;
- Children being ready for kindergarten; and
- Children learning and singing a number of songs.

Parents placed emphasis on the role of teachers in communicating with the families, and paying close attention to the well-being of the preschool children. One participant noted that teachers at the Barnum/Colores site even watched out for potential health concerns. The parents regarded the site's relationship with the child and her/his family as the first indicator of a quality education and the child's increased learning comprehension and socialization to be the next best indicator.

What do you know about the Denver Preschool Program (DPP)?

None of the parents in the focus group had heard of DPP. Eventually, one parent recalled that she might have heard something about DPP on a news report done by Univision. She indicated that she hadn't paid very much attention to it because she assumed that the program would cost a lot of money. She didn't recall any specifics. After Sixth Sun Consultants described the Denver Preschool Program, this parent suggested that the first thing DPP mention in future reports is that they provide parents with financial support to send their children to preschool.

Parents were unable to comment on whether or not the information was easy to find, or if anything was missing. They also had no feedback regarding possible access barriers to DPP.

Where would you go to find information about a program like this? How could DPP communicate more effectively with the community about its program?

At first, participants suggested that DPP post and distribute fliers throughout Spanish-speaking neighborhoods. They also recommended commercials during telenovelas, when a number of mothers might be watching television and doing chores, working to get more coverage on Univision and other news programs, and advertising on the radio in the evening or via radio news programs. While parents recommended some forms of media to advertise, the facilitators observed that parents primarily value

information they get from people and institutions with which they have relationships. When that is not available, parents appeared to prefer information through direct, interactive communication.

The group ruled out texts and e-mail communications as a potential means of communicating with Latino communities about DPP. Participants made it clear that the best way DPP can outreach to Latino communities is by asking parents who have already had their children in DPP programs to spread the word. These parents are the people with the most influence. DPP parents should be given fliers to distribute to their family members, friends, and neighbors. People are most likely to listen to others in their community, particularly those who have had first-hand experience with the program, recommend the program and are able to answer questions about it.

Parents also thought that DPP should work with public schools to distribute information. Participants pointed out that they often have children of various ages, and advertising DPP through the fliers and materials sent out through the schools would be an effective means of communicating about the program. One parent recommended that DPP partner with schools to have them sign off to confirm receipt of the information, similar to the way that some parents have to sign off on their children's homework. Another parent recommended that after distributing written information via school fliers, DPP host an information forum/group at the school for parents. In this way, parents could come and hear more about the program in person, ask questions, and get a better sense of DPP.

Parents also made it clear that DPP should emphasize that the Program offers financial assistance.

Based on the description of DPP, would you enroll in a DPP approved program? If immigration issues are a concern for you, do you see ways of still accessing DPP?

Focus group participants expressed interest in the Denver Preschool Program. Without any prompting or suggestion from the facilitators, eight of the nine parents participating in the focus group requested more information about DPP. They expressed interest in where they could find applications, what the application process was like, possible summer preschool programs, and more general information about DPP. Immigration status was not raised as a concern.

Why did you not enroll your child in a DPP qualified preschool?

Focus group participants could not respond to this question because none of them were familiar with the Denver Preschool Program.

Did you visit different schools before you chose this one? Did you see differences between DPP qualified preschool providers and the preschool provider you chose to enroll your child in?

While parents could not comment on or compare DPP approved vs. non-DPP approved sites, participants were able to provide information about their selection process. Four of the parents indicated that they had visited more than one site before selecting the Barnum/Colores Head Start Program. One parent had visited two sites other than Barnum/Colores. She did not like the first site

because it required her child to be five years old to participate and did not like the other site because the people there were too impersonal. She did not know if either of these sites were DPP approved providers.

Three other participants had visited one other Head Start site before selecting the Barnum/Colores Head Start Program. Those parents chose Barnum/Colores because Head Start administrators recommended that they enroll their children in the Head Start preschool closest to their home. Some of the parents who did not visit other sites said that they had specifically sought out the Barnum/Colores Head Start Program because it had been recommended to them.

Can you think of ways for DPP to improve? What about improvements to the program your child is in?

Focus group participants could not respond to the first part of this question because none of them were familiar with the Denver Preschool Program.

Regarding the Barnum/Colores Head Start Program, parents were very satisfied with the program overall. They expressed appreciation for the teachers, and the teachers' treatment of their children. They did not think there was much that needed improvement. Overall, the parents liked the quality of the education and engagement, and the friendly atmosphere of the facility.

Appendix H: Analysis of Re-Rated DPP Providers

Analysis of DPP Provider Re-Rating Using the Qualistar Process

Prepared for the
Denver Preschool Program

By
Augenblick, Palaich and Associates

August 2010

Introduction

An important aim of the Denver Preschool Program (DPP) is to improve the quality of preschools available to families in the Denver area. When preschool sites choose to participate in DPP, they receive a rating from Qualistar Early Learning. This rating process evaluates the quality of the program in the following areas: 1) Learning Environment, 2) Family Partnerships, 3) Training and Education, 4) Adult-to-Child Ratios and Group Size, and 5) Accreditation. The total number of points a site earns in all of these areas determines the star rating for the school. Ratings are on a scale of 0 to 4-Stars, with 4-Stars representing the highest quality program.

Based upon a facility's star rating, DPP allocates funds to support quality improvement efforts for each DPP participating provider.⁸ Funds may be used to purchase classroom equipment, materials, and other resources that improve the quality of both the indoor and the outdoor learning environments. These quality improvement funds may also be used to increase the level of education and training of the provider's classroom staff and administration. Tuition assistance and scholarships may be provided to enable staff to attend college level early childhood education classes, college level courses leading to an education related degree and for approved seminars, workshops, conferences.

Coaching services are provided by DPP to support those classrooms that have completed the Qualistar Rating process and have received a "provisional," "1-Star," or "2-Star" rating. Providers may also choose to access up to a year of coaching services in preparation for their first Qualistar rating.

Sites that participate in DPP are required to go through a re-rating process with Qualistar every two years. The re-rating process allows for changes in quality to be documented and helps to maintain DPP's emphasis on quality improvement.

This is the first year that DPP sites are going through the re-rating process. As of March 2010, 127 classrooms at 74 sites have been re-rated. This includes 125 center-based classrooms, 59 at DPS sites and 66 at community sites, and two home-based classrooms.⁹ This report highlights changes in the level of quality in these re-rated classrooms during their first two years of participation in DPP.

Understanding the Qualistar Rating

In the Qualistar rating system, site ratings are based on scores in the five quality components discussed below.

Learning Environment

Points are awarded for physical classroom space, personal care routines, language and reasoning

⁸ The amount of quality improvement funds allocated to a participating DPP provider is dependent on their current rating. "Introduction to quality" sites (those accessing coaching services prior to being rated) as well as providers that have completed the Qualistar rating process and have received a provisional to two star rating receive \$35 per DPP approved child while Providers with Qualistar rating of 3 or 4 stars receive \$70 per DPP approved child. This year, DPP also instituted an incentive for new Providers of between \$750 and \$1,000 for those that joined the program after May 15th 2009.

⁹ One of the home sites included was relicensed as a center-based program after re-rating, but is considered a home-based site for the purposes of this analysis.

activities, child interactions and program structure. Qualistar rating points earned in this area range from 0 to 10.

Family Partnerships

Points are awarded for communication, collaboration, and family involvement opportunities. Information for this measurement is collected through family questionnaires and program documentation. Points earned in this area range from 0 to 10.

Training and Education

Points are based on the formal training staff has received as well as their level of experience. There are separate scales for center administrators and child care providers/home providers. Points earned in this area range from 0 to 10.

Adult-to-Child Ratios and Group Size

Points are based on adult to child ratios and overall classroom group size. For centers, ratios are scored at 0, 4, 6, or 8 points, with an additional 0 to 2 points given for group size. For family homes, ratios are scored at 0, 5, 6, 7 or 8 points, with 0 to 2 points given for group size. Points earned in this area range from 0 to 10.

Accreditation

Sites can also earn an additional 2 points for receiving and maintaining program accreditation through an approved organization such as NYAEC or NAFCC.

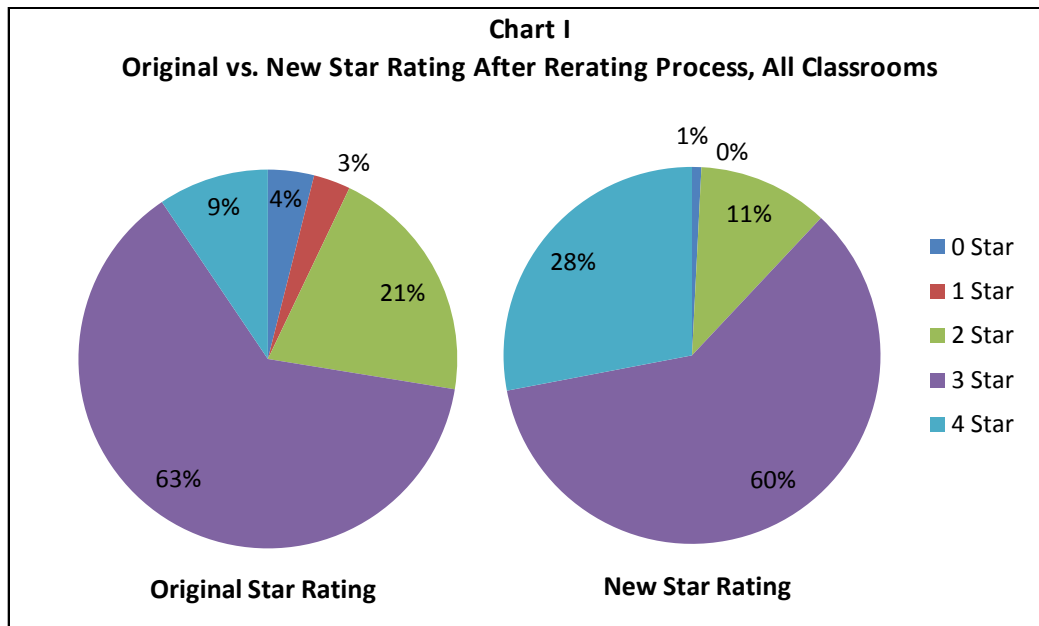
The combined point total determines the site's star rating. The table below sets forth the points needed for each star level:

Table I	
Points Needed for each Star Rating Level	
Star Rating	Points Needed
Provisional	0-9 points OR Learning Environment Score of 0
1-Star	10- 17 points
2-Star	18- 25 points
3-Star	26- 33 points
4-Star	34- 42 points

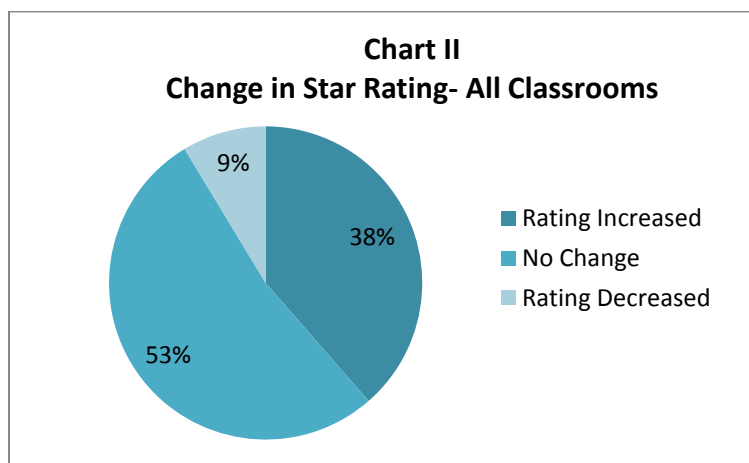
Re-Rating Results

Changes in Star Rating by Classroom

The two comparisons shown in Chart I provide a snapshot of the initial star ratings and the new ratings for the 127 classrooms, 59 DPS, 66 community center-based and 2 community home-based, which were re-rated this year.

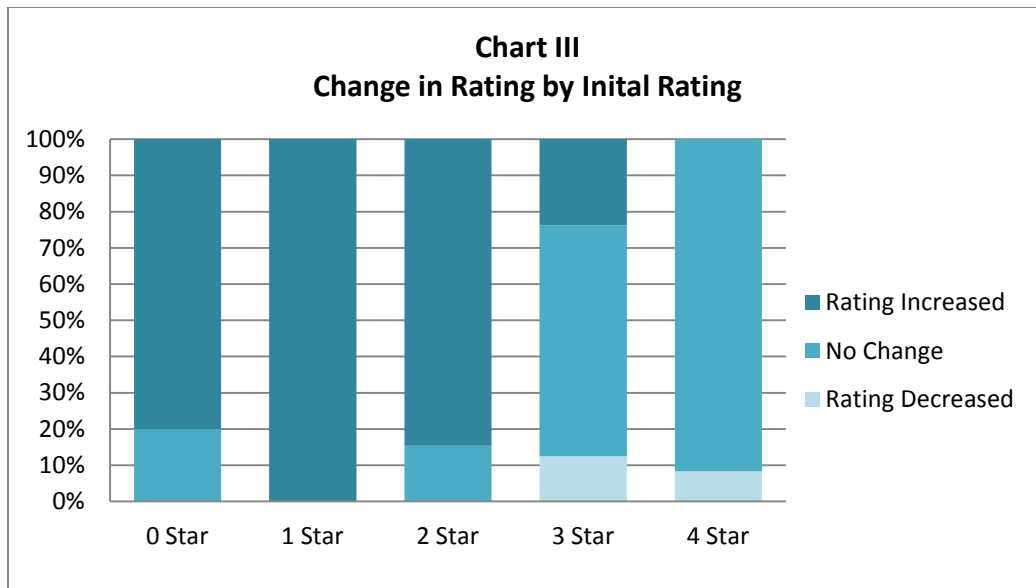


As the pie chart on the left of Chart 1 indicates, initially 72% of classrooms received a 3-Star or 4-Star rating. After the re-rating, the percentage of classrooms with a 3 or 4-Star rating increased to 88% with 28% of classrooms earning the highest rating of 4-Stars. While 28% of classrooms had an initial rating of 2-Stars or less, upon re-rating only 12% of classrooms earned ratings of 2-Stars or lower. The percentage of classrooms with a 0-Star rating decreased from four percent to one percent. Chart II shows the movement in the ratings for these classrooms.



As a result of the re-rating process, ratings for 38% of the classrooms increased, ratings for 53% of the classrooms stayed the same and ratings for nine percent of the classrooms decreased.

Chart III shows the amount of improvement by classroom when classrooms are separated by their initial star rating.

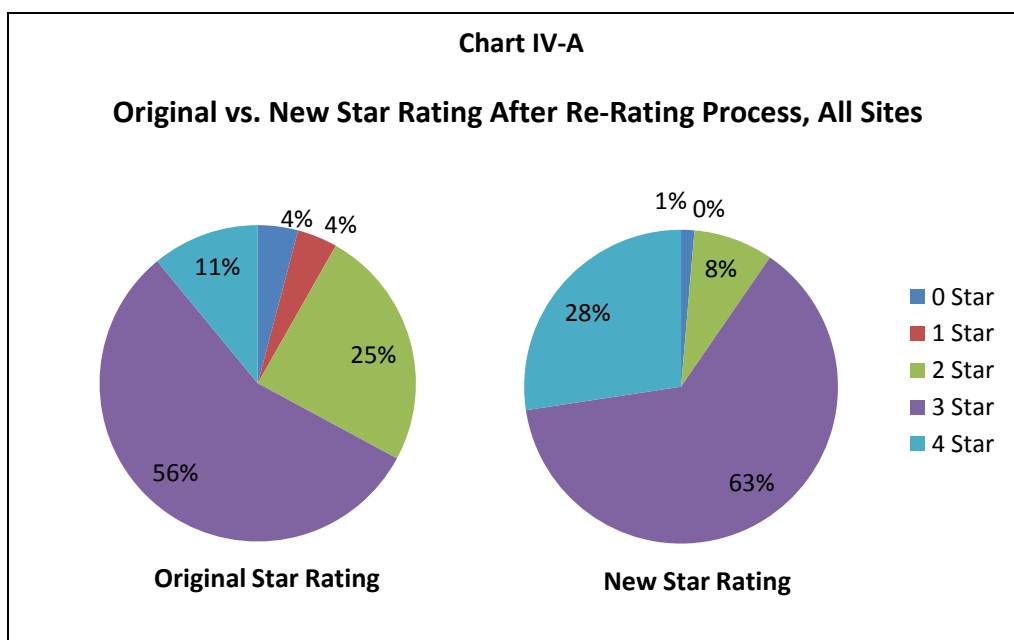


All classrooms initially rated 0 to 2-Stars increased their star rating. Eighty percent of 0-Star classrooms, 100% of 1-Star classrooms, and 85% of 2-Star rated classrooms increased their rating. No 0 to 2-Star classrooms decreased their rating. These classrooms which were initially rated with 0 to 2-Stars were eligible to receive both quality improvement dollars and coaching.

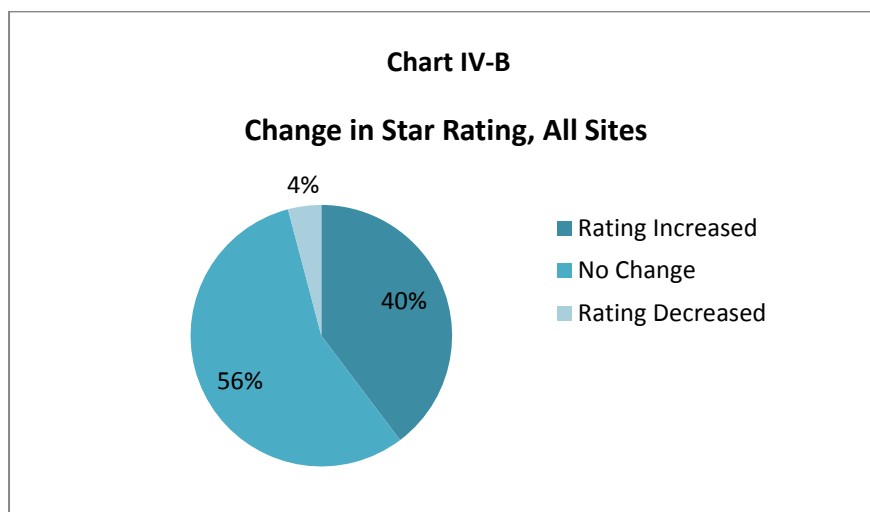
Of the 63 % of all classrooms that initially received a 3-Star rating, 24 %increased their rating to become a 4-Star classroom, while 64 % maintained their initial star rating. The remaining 13 percent of sites with an initial 3-Star rating fell to a 2-Star rating. All 4-Star classrooms except one maintained their high rating. The lone exception was re-rated a 3-Star classroom.

Changes in Star Rating by Site

The following tables illustrate the overall results of the re-rating process at the site level. Chart IV-A shows the percentage of sites at each star rating level for both the Original Star Rating and New Star Rating events. Chart IV-B summarizes whether ratings for sites increased, decreased, or stayed the same.



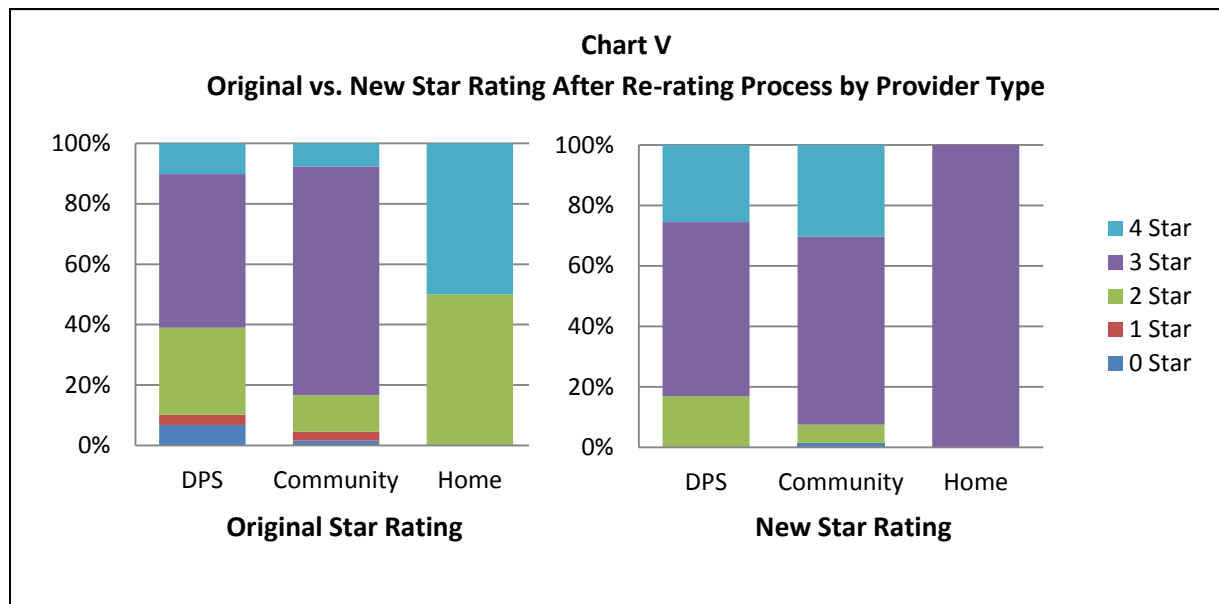
Initially, 77% of sites were rated 3-Star or 4-Star with 11% rated at 4-Stars. After re-rating, 91% of sites were rated 3-Star or 4-Star with 28 % rated 4-Star.



Forty percent of sites increased their star rating; 56% stayed the same. Only four percent of sites decreased their rating. While nine percent of all classrooms that went through re-rating decreased their rating, the decline occurred at only four percent of all sites.

Changes in Star Rating by Provider Type

Variations in changes in ratings also emerged by type of preschool. Chart V compares the initial and new ratings of classrooms by the type of provider, DPS, community center-based and home-based.



Sixty percent of the 59 DPS classrooms that went through the re-rating process in 2010 had an initial rating of 3 or 4-Stars. Another 30% were rated 2-Stars. The remaining 10% received a rating of 0 or 1-Star.

Of the 66 community center-based classrooms that went through the re-rating process, 84% had an initial rating of 3 or 4-Stars. The majority of the remaining community center-based classrooms initially received 2-Stars. Two classrooms received a 1-Star rating; and one classroom had an initial 0-Star rating.

Of the two home-based classrooms that went through the re-rating process, one initially received a 2-Star rating and the other received a 4-Star rating.

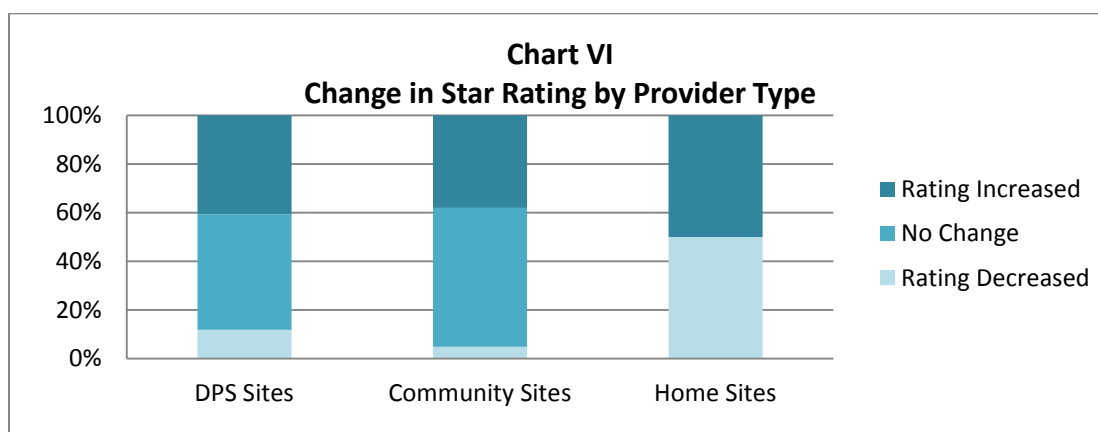
The bar chart on the right shows the star ratings of these classrooms after the re-rating process. Over 80% of DPS classrooms were now rated at 3 or 4-Stars, with 25% of the classrooms receiving 4-Stars. No DPS classroom received less than a 2-Star rating after re-rating process.

More than 92% of community center-based classrooms were awarded a rating of 3 or 4-Stars, with 30% of the classrooms receiving 4-Stars. Of the remaining community center-based classrooms four earned a 2-Star rating and one stayed at a 0-Star rating. The two home-based classrooms were both rated 3-Stars after re-rating.

Table II shows the number of DPS, community center-based or home sites classrooms where the rating increased, decreased, or stayed the same.

Table II				
Classroom Re-Rating Results By Provider Type				
Provider Type	Rating Decreased	No Change in Rating	Rating Increased	Total # of Classrooms
DPS Sites	7	28	24	59
Community Sites	3	39	24	66
Home Sites	1	-	1	2
All Providers	11	67	49	127

Chart VI shows these results as percentages of the total number of classrooms for each provider type.



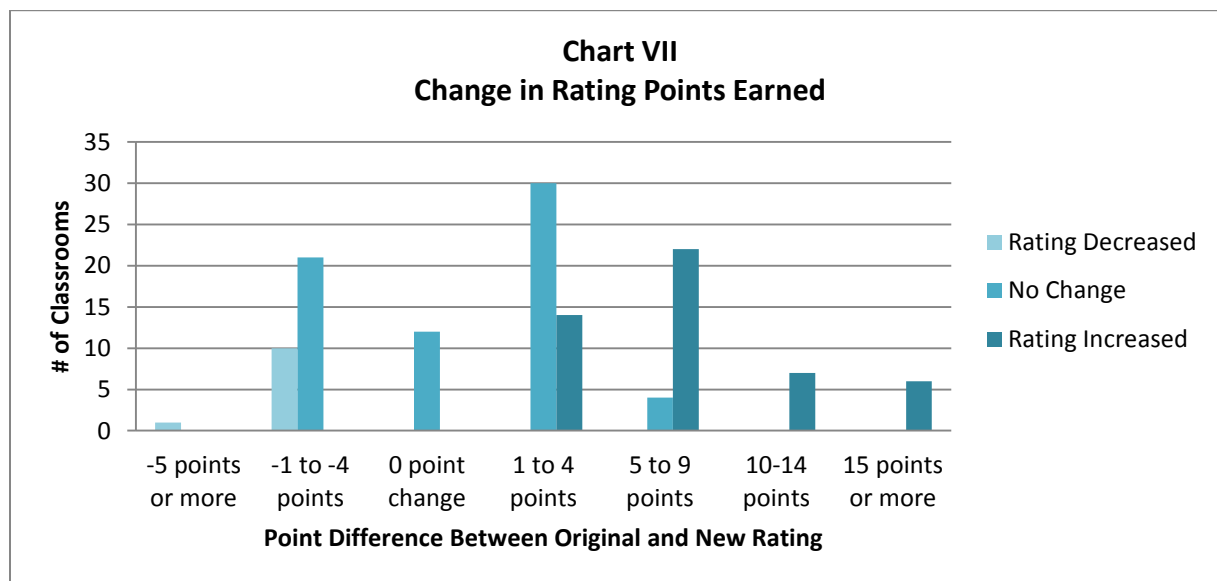
For classrooms at DPS sites, just over 40% of classrooms increased their star rating, while nearly 50% of classrooms maintained the same star rating. Community center –based classrooms saw similar changes in their ratings; 38% of community classrooms increased their star rating while 57% maintained their rating. Results for the two home-based sites were split; one increased its rating while the other decreased its rating.

A smaller percentage of classrooms for all provider types saw a decrease in star rating. Just over 10 % of DPS classrooms saw their rating decrease. In the community center-based sector, 5 percent of classrooms experienced a decreased star rating. The seven DPS classrooms that saw their star rating decrease were at just two DPS school sites. For six of the seven DPS classrooms that saw a decrease as well as for the home-based classroom that had its rating decrease, the star rating decrease was due to earning just two or three points less than had been received during the initial rating.

Changes in Rating Points Earned

In the Qualistar rating system a program can earn up to a total of 42 points. The intervals between star rating levels are roughly seven points so in the re-rating process a different point score does not

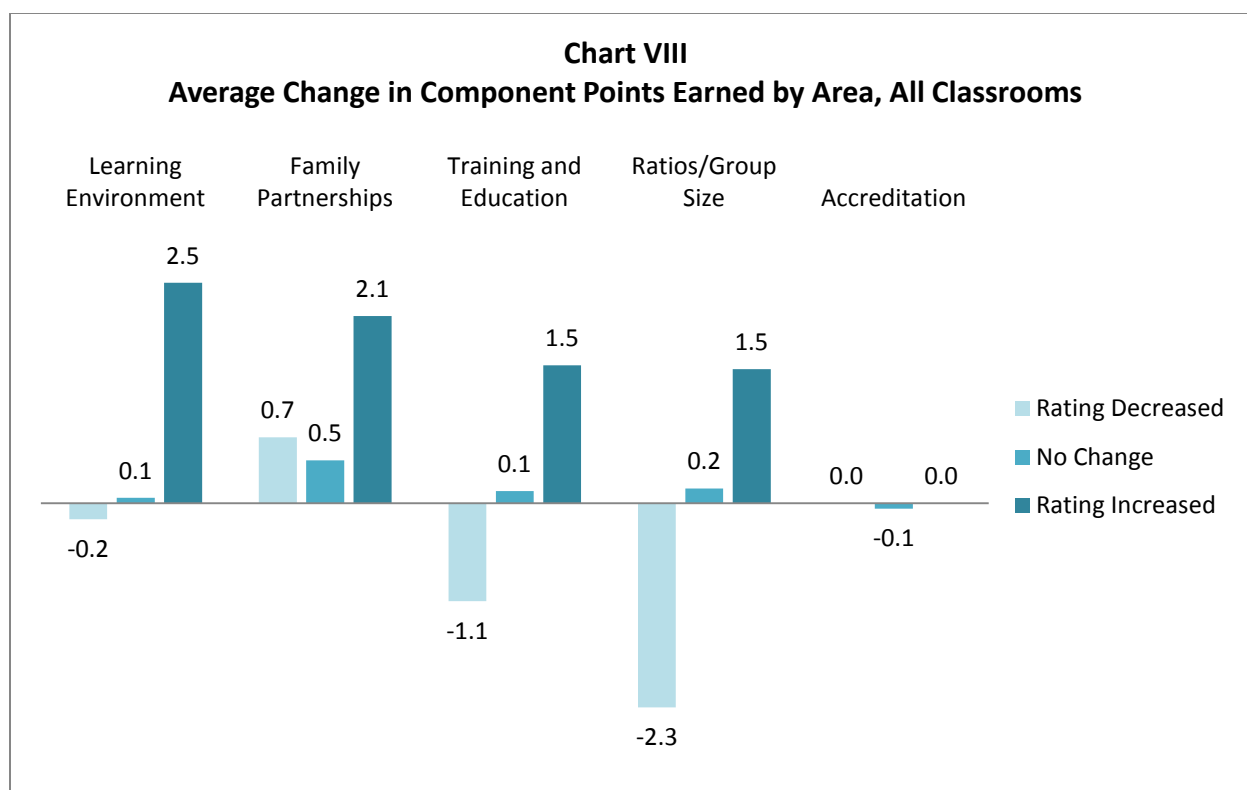
necessarily result in a change in rating. For the original and new Qualistar ratings, Chart VII illustrates the change in rating points earned based upon whether the classroom’s rating increased, decreased or remained the same.



For the majority of classrooms there was positive movement in the number of points earned. Two-thirds of the classrooms increased the number of points they earned; for one-third of those classrooms this constituted an increase of five points or more. About a fourth of classrooms lost one to four points in the re-rating process. Only one classroom lost five or more points.

Similar increases or decreases could have different results. Of the 44 classrooms that increased their score by one to four points, 14 advanced to the next star level while 30 had their star rating remain the same. Another four classrooms increased their total score by five to nine points, but did not meet the threshold for the next star level. Similarly, of the 31 classrooms that saw a decrease of one to four points in their total score, 21 had their rating remain the same, while 10 classrooms had their rating lowered.

Differences in points earned can also be examined for each of the Qualistar rating components: 1) Learning Environment, 2) Family Partnerships, 3) Training and Education, 4) Adult-to-Child Ratios and Group Size, and 5) Accreditation. Chart VIII shows the average point change in each of these areas, for all classrooms, grouped by whether their star rating increased, decreased or stayed the same.

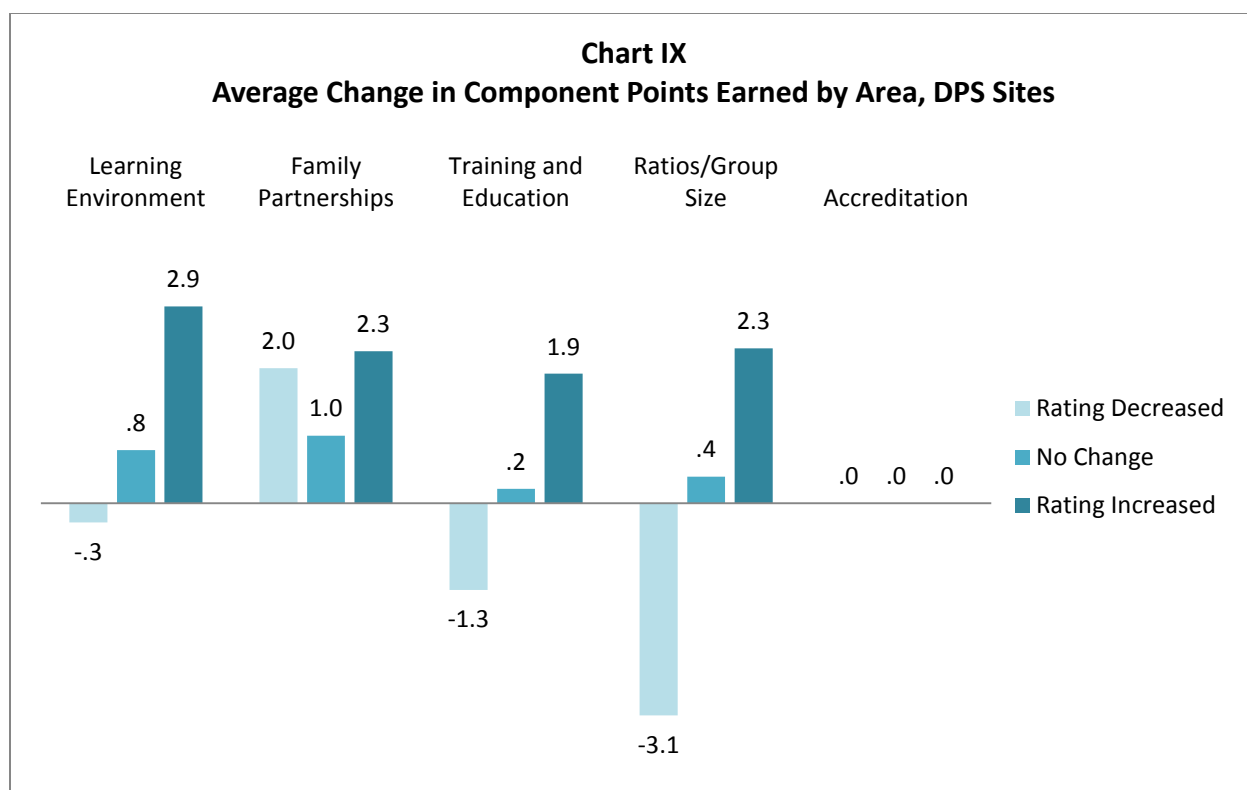


For classrooms that had their rating decrease, the primary area of loss was the Ratios/Group Size area with an average decrease of 2.3 points. On average, classrooms that had their rating stay the same showed very little change in their score in most areas, with modest growth in Family Partnerships. For classrooms that had a star rating increase, the two areas where they typically earned additional points were the Learning Environment area and the Family Partnerships area, with average increases of 2.5 and 2.1 points, respectively.

The evaluation also looked at whether there were any differences in how scores changed based on whether preschools were DPS or community center-based sites. Due to the fact that only three sites had been re-rated and all maintained their prior rating, home-based sites were not examined separately.

DPS Sites

Chart IX shows the average change in each area for all DPS sites.



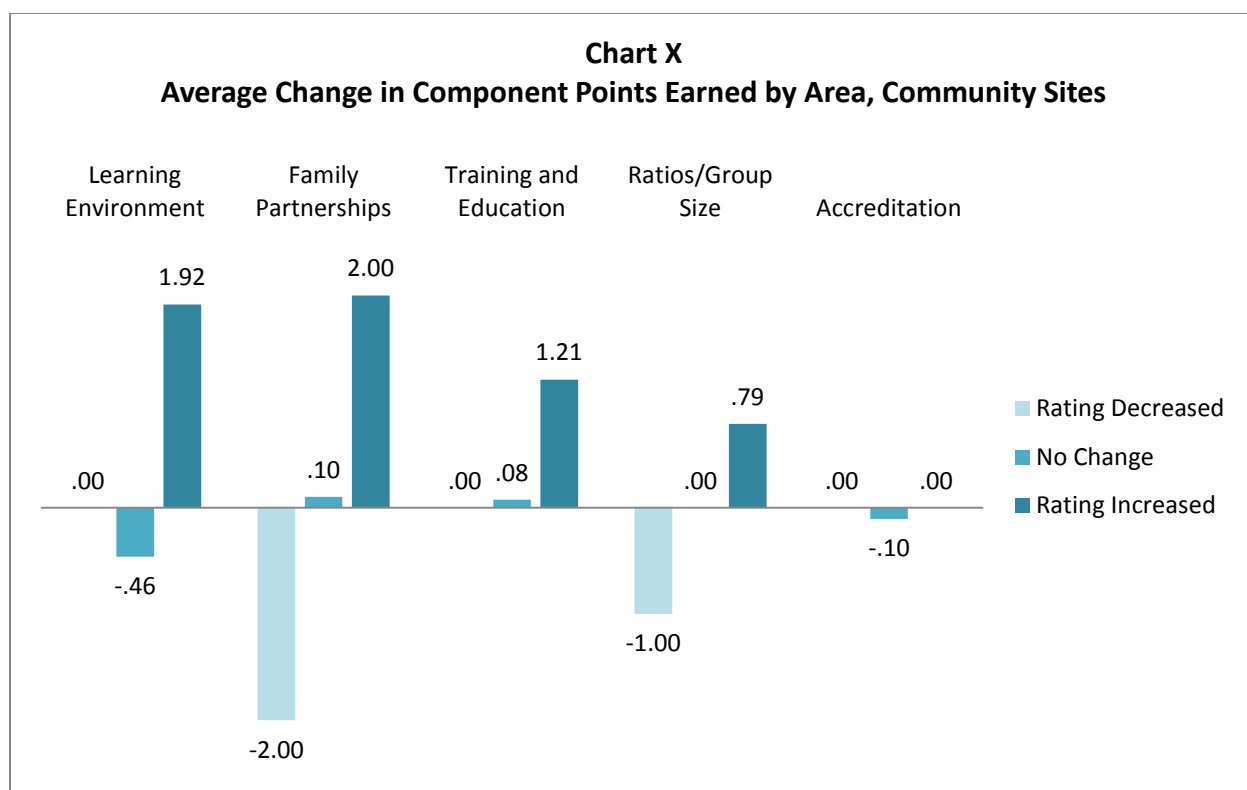
Classrooms that increased their star rating gained on average of 2.9 points in the Learning Environment component and also saw gains of an average of 2.3 points in both the Family Partnerships and Ratios/Group Size components. This group also saw increases of an average of 1.9 points in the Training and Education component.

The seven DPS classrooms where the star rating decreased lost the most points, an average of 3.1, in the Ratios/Group size component. These same seven classrooms also gained two points on average in the Family Partnerships component.

Classrooms that had their star rating stay the same saw some increases in the Family Partnerships and Learning Environment components.

Community Sites

Chart X shows the average change in each area for all community center-based sites. Classrooms which had their rating increase saw a 2.0 point gain on average in the Family Partnerships component and a 1.92 point gain in the Learning Environment component.



The three classrooms at one site where the star rating decreased lost two points in the Family Partnerships component and another point in the Ratios/Group Size component.

Sites that had their rating stay the same on average saw minimal change in the score in each component.

Comparison DPS and Community Center-based Sites

DPS classrooms that had a rating decrease lost points in the Ratios/Group Size and Training and Education components. Community center-based sites, on the other hand, lost points in the Family Partnerships component, an area where DPS sites tended to gain points.

DPS classrooms that increased their star rating gained points fairly evenly across all of the component areas with the exception of Accreditation, while community center-based sites gained points primarily in two component areas, Learning Environment and Family Partnerships. DPS classrooms on average saw greater increases in the number of points earned than did community center-based sites. When the average point increase in each category is totaled, DPS classrooms earned 9.4 points more after re-rating while community classrooms earned an additional 5.92 points after re-rating. The original average scores for community center-based classrooms that had rating increases was 27.7, while the original average DPS score was six points lower at 21.7. After re-rating the average score for community center-based classrooms was 33.6 and the average score for DPS classrooms was 31.0. While both sets of classrooms made gains, the gap between the community center-based and DPS programs narrowed.

Conclusion

Overall, more classrooms were rated at the higher quality levels after the re-rating process. Highlights from the re-rating process include the following:

- 88% of classrooms that went through the re-rating process are now rated 3 or 4-Stars (as compared to 72 previously) and nearly 30% of classrooms are now rated 4-Stars;
- Nearly 40 % of all classrooms increased their star rating, while 85% of classrooms with an initial rating of 2-Stars or less increased their star rating;
- Two-thirds of classrooms increased their overall rating score even if they did not increase their star rating;
- On average, the highest point gains for all classrooms were in the Learning Environment and Family Partnerships components; and
- Star ratings and average rating scores were higher for community center-based classrooms both initially and after re-rating than they were for DPS classrooms; however, this gap is closing.

The rating process has created a greater awareness among preschools of what constitutes a high quality program and has helped programs to identify areas in which they can make improvements and increase the quality level of their programs. DPP's provision of coaching support and funds for materials and professional development are viewed as important investments in quality improvement in the DPP preschools. The picture this report provides of the first wave of classrooms to go through the re-rating process, indicates that the DPP's emphasis on and support of quality improvement is having a positive impact on the quality of preschool classrooms available to Denver families.

Appendix I: Description of Demographic Recoding

Coding of Child's Ethnicity	
Coded Ethnicity Category	Included in Category
Black	African American; Black
Hispanic	Hispanic
White	White; White (Not of Hispanic origin); White (not Hispanic)
Other	Other; Asian or Pacific Islander; American Indian or Alaska Native; Multi; Mayan Indian; Bi-Racial; Indian; Pakistan; Mixed Race; "Any combination of more than one ethnicity such as Black/White"
Ethnicity Not Reported	Not provided; "Missing data"

Coding of home language	
Coded Home Language Category	Included in Category
English	English; Mostly or only English"; Any combination of 2 or more languages beginning with English, such as English/Arabic"
Spanish	Spanish; "Any combination of 2 or more languages beginning with Spanish, such as Spanish/English";
Other	Not Reported, Not Provided, Not Selected; Arabic; Ana; Dinka; Amharic; Oromo; Tigrina; Other; Kirundi, Mandingo; Somali; Oromic; Fulani; Ameharic; Portuguese; Vietnamese; Amahaic; Somali Jez Gora; Another language and English equally; French; Russian; Chinese; Malayalam; Hmong; Mongolian; Koren; Karen; Korean; Irsil; Chindi; Ardu; "Any combination of 2 or more languages that does not begin with English or Spanish"
These codes are based on the assumption that parents are most likely to list their primary home language first in a list of more than one language. This does not mean that it is the only language spoken at home.	