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# **AN EVALUATION OF THE DENVER PRESCHOOL PROGRAM 2012-2013**

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## I. Executive Summary

The Denver Preschool Program (DPP) was approved by voters in 2006 to encourage families to enroll their 4-year-old children in quality preschool programs so that the children would enter kindergarten ready to learn and increase the likelihood of their success in kindergarten and beyond. Since its first year of operation during the 2007-08 school year, DPP has made enormous progress toward these goals. In 2013, DPP achieved the following milestones:

- A total of 175 providers, operating at 252 sites, served as approved DPP providers.
- A total of 5,467 children in the 2012-13 school year received approval for DPP tuition credits.
- Of the 252 sites, 207 have Qualistar ratings of 3 or 4 stars, the two highest ratings.
- The vast majority of DPP students were enrolled in top rated classrooms. In 2012-13, 90 percent of DPP students were enrolled in 3- or 4-star classrooms.
- In 2013, a total of 160 classrooms at 83 sites completed the re-rating process, bringing the total number of classrooms re-rated since 2010 to 555.

Significant findings of this year's evaluation include the following:

- **DPP continues to provide high quality preschool to a majority of 4-year -olds in Denver.** Serving over 5,400 children, DPP enrolls around 70 percent of all Denver 4-year-olds.
- **DPP providers continue to embrace quality improvement efforts,** with over 80 percent of providers taking advantage of the Program's quality improvement process or resources , and 90 percent of students enrolled in a highly-rated program. Providers report modifying hiring standards and curriculum, and increasingly taking advantage of the coaching support offered by DPP.
- **Enrolling their children in preschool continues to provide Denver parents with the opportunity to attend school, to work, or to have some degree of free time.** In addition, 90 percent of providers have reported increasing their hours due to DPP. The financial support offered to parents through the tuition credit continues to be important. Across all family income levels, the number of parents reporting that they would still have enrolled their child in preschool without the tuition credit, decreased. Parents also reported that the tuition credit helps them keep their child continuously enrolled in preschool and has an impact on the number of hours their child is enrolled, particularly among low income families
- **DPP students outperform their non-DPP counterparts on third grade TCAP reading scores,** with DPP students being more likely, by 5.5 percent, to reach advanced or proficient levels, and less likely, by 6.1 percent, to score at unsatisfactory levels. DPP students in every race/ethnicity category outperformed their non-DPP counterparts, as did students who qualified for Free or Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL).



- **Providers are generally very happy with DPP operations, reporting very few concerns.** Concerns they did report centered on the rating system and process. Parents gave the ease and speed of the DPP application process higher ratings this year and are reporting that they are increasingly able to complete the application without assistance from DPP or the provider.
- **There continues to be significant gaps in knowledge and understanding amongst parents and providers regarding the source of DPP funding.** The number of parents who know that DPP was part of a ballot initiative, and will therefore need re-authorizing, decreased from prior years. While knowledge amongst providers was better, that too, decreased over the last year. Providers are also less comfortable explaining the tuition credits to parents.

While this evaluation does find room for improvement, particularly in the areas of parent and provider knowledge about DPP, it also finds that DPP continues to realize its goals and manage its financial resources well. DPP has also continued its leadership role in both local and statewide discussions of childcare and preschool quality. Finally, with the first significant DPP cohort having taken their third-grade TCAP exams this year, and scoring significantly higher on the reading test than their non-DPP counterparts, the anticipated long-term benefits of high-quality preschool are beginning to be seen.

## II. Description of the Denver Preschool Program (DPP)

The Denver Preschool Program (DPP) was created to encourage Denver families with 4-year-old children to voluntarily enroll in quality preschool programs so that children can be successful in kindergarten and beyond. In November 2006, Denver voters approved the Preschool Matters initiative, under which the city collects a .12 percent sales tax that is set aside for DPP. Since January 2007, the city has collected approximately \$11 million annually for the program, with over 80 percent used to provide tuition credits to parents of 4-year old preschoolers and to provide grants to preschools to improve the quality of their programs. Five percent of the tax revenue is used to administer the program and the balance is used for program operations and evaluations. Although DPP did begin operating midway through the 2007-2008 school year, it did not become fully operational until the 2008-2009 school year. Thus, the 2012-2013 school year was DPP's fifth year as a fully operational program.<sup>1</sup>

### Theory of Action

DPP's primary 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<sup>2</sup>:

- When DPP uses an effective and efficient application process to provide tuition credits to offset preschool costs for families, 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.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this report, the 2007-08 school year will be referred to as 2008; the 2008-09 school year as 2009; the 2009-10 school year as 2010; the 2010-11 school year as 2011; the 2011-2012 school year as 2012; and the 2012-13 school year will be referred to as 2013.

<sup>2</sup> In the Evaluation Reports prior to 2012, a fourth point was included in the Theory of Action, related to the goal of decreasing the complexity of preschool financing for parents and service providers. In the 2011-12 school year DPP implemented a "no-deductions" tuition credit model to address this goal. Prior to this, in an attempt to make DPP funding the "last dollar in," a family was not necessarily guaranteed the dollar amount published on the DPP tuition credit scale; rather, if that family received other public funding dollars, a deduction for those dollars was taken out of the base tuition credit amount. In an effort to decrease the complexity of preschool financing, however, since the 2011-12 school year, DPP eliminated this deductions process and instead implemented the "no-deductions" scale, where, short of absences, each family is assured of receiving the monthly amount published on the scale for their income tier. As a result of this change, parents and providers can better anticipate the dollar figure they will receive from DPP.

- 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.

### 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.

To promote the dual goals of encouraging families to enroll their eligible children in preschool and encouraging preschool providers to improve the quality of their services, DPP provides several different types of support. Assistance is distributed directly to preschools in the following ways: (1) as 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) as a mini-grant to preschool providers, which pays for approved supplies and materials that improve the quality of their classrooms; (3) as professional development and coaching for preschool staff to improve their knowledge and skills; and (4) as financial support for the quality rating assessment, a cost that would have previously been charged to the preschool provider.

The DPP tuition credit is available for children of Denver residents to enroll in qualified preschool programs the year before kindergarten. The amount of the credit, which ranges from \$10 to \$419 per month, is determined by the following factors:

1. The cost differential to run a preschool program at each of four different **quality levels**;
2. A family's **income level and size**; and
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**.

In order to obtain a tuition credit, the child's family first applies to DPP. Applications are then reviewed by a DPP contractor, Metrix Advisors, to verify income and residence and to determine whether the child will attend full-time, part-time, or for an extended-day. 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. For any one child, a provider cannot receive more than the amount of tuition charged.

### 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 a participant in DPP's quality improvement program, and serve children who live in Denver. The provider may 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 which includes attendance at an introductory orientation, receipt of a quality rating, and development of a quality improvement plan. The majority of participating preschools are assessed by DPP's quality ratings contractor, Qualistar Colorado. Qualistar uses a four-star system that rates the quality of preschool classrooms in five areas: (1) learning environment, (2) family partnership, (3) staff training and education, (4) adult-to-child ratio, and (5) accreditation through a national accrediting agency. Preschools also have the option of obtaining a National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation, which qualifies for an automatic star rating of 4, or National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) accreditation, which qualifies for an automatic star rating of 3. Both accreditations are nationally recognized and respected. DPP recognizes that higher quality preschool costs more, and thus DPP raises the tuition credit available as classrooms move from 1-star to 4-star ratings.

DPP also provides support for quality improvement efforts for each of the participating DPP providers. In 2011-12, the system was redesigned as a credit-based system. Providers are allocated a certain number of credits based on their quality rating and their size. These credits can be applied towards: (1) quality improvement coaching courses, (2) funds to purchase non-consumable learning materials, or (3) funds to be used for qualifying early childhood education (ECE) college coursework, conferences, or trainings. One coaching credit is equal to five hours of quality improvement coaching, and providers can earn up to seven credits in a year.

Sites that participate in DPP are required to go through a re-rating process with Qualistar every two years, unless they have NAEYC or NAFCC accreditation. The re-rating process allows for changes in quality to be monitored and maintains DPP's emphasis on quality improvement (See Appendix G).

### **DPP Organization and Staffing**

DPP is required to provide status reports to the Denver Office of Children's Affairs (formerly the Mayor's Office for Education and Children), a Denver city agency. A seven-member board of directors and a 25-member board of advisors oversee the program. DPP has four administrative staff: a President/Chief Executive Officer, a Senior Director of Strategy and Communications, a Program Director, and a Business Manager.

To attain a number of operational and policy objectives, DPP subcontracts with the following organizations: (1) Metrix Advisors provides customer service support to parents, processes all tuition credit applications and time/attendance data for students, and calculates the appropriate tuition credit payments to be made directly to approved preschool providers; (2) Qualistar Colorado and Clayton Early

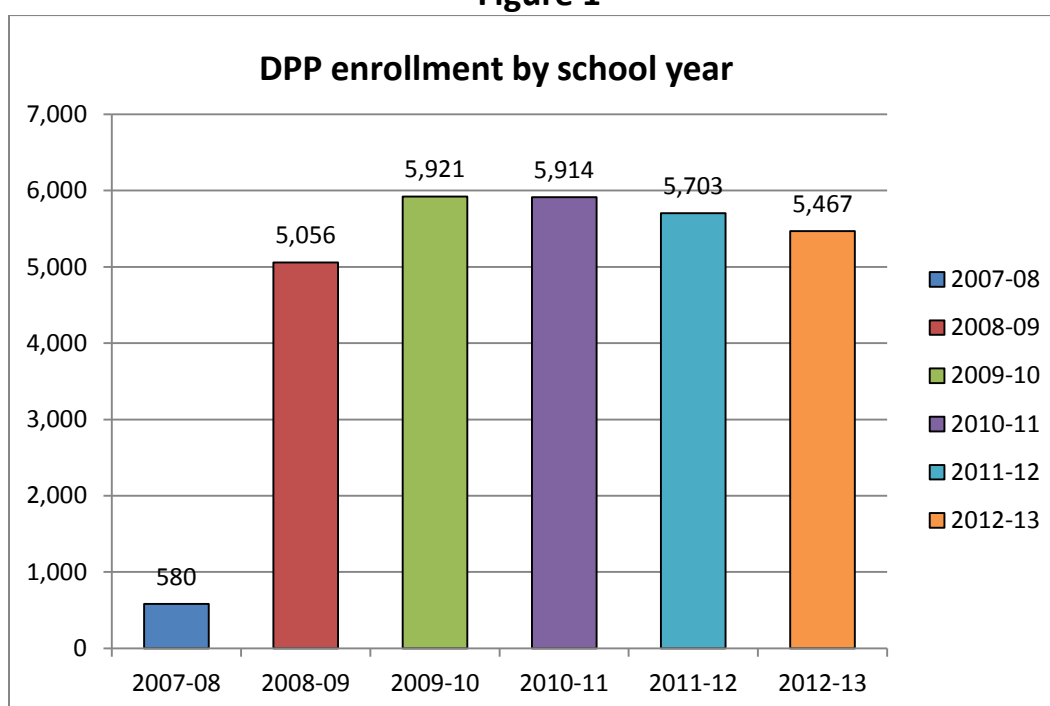
Learning conduct quality assessments and assist DPP with implementation of its classroom rating system; (3) the Flahive Group provides DPP with quality assurance support; (4) the Denver Early Childhood Council manages DPP's quality improvement investment and oversees coaching and technical assistance to providers; 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 contracts with public relations consultants for advertising, program outreach, and other services.

### III. Status of DPP in 2012-13<sup>3</sup>

#### Number of Children

Denver Preschool Program enrollment remained constant in 2012-13 with 5,467 children enrolled. The total number of preschool providers has also remained constant over the years, with 175 providers in 2013, providing services at 252 sites (see Table 2 for most recent provider data). Of the 5,467 DPP children, 3,599 received services at 78 Denver Public Schools (DPS) sites, while 1,514 received services from 153 center-based sites and 28 from 21 home-based sites. Thirty-five students were enrolled in both DPS and community sites during different times of the day.<sup>4</sup> Figure 1 shows DPP enrollment by school year over the duration of the program. These totals represent nearly 70% of the total population of 4-year-olds in Denver.

**Figure 1**



<sup>3</sup> The information on participating students and their families and providers is taken in October-November of the report year. Additional students are enrolled throughout the year, accounting for the discrepancy between the total student figures used in Figure 1 for 2013 and prior years, and student figures found throughout the rest of this report and in prior year reports.

<sup>4</sup> For the 2012-13 school year, 36 children were enrolled in two different providers each with different ratings and these children are not included in this analysis. Another 42 students were enrolled in two different preschools, which each had the same rating. These 42 students were included in the analysis. The individual numbers do not equal the total student count as those with missing data such as center type and star ratings are not included.

Table 1 below shows the distribution of children enrolled in DPP-approved sites. Approximately 47 percent of DPP preschools enroll fewer than 10 students. Not surprisingly, both center-based and home-based sites were likely to enroll fewer students per site than DPS sites.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 1**

<b>DPP Students by Provider Type and Size in 2013</b>					
# of Children Enrolled	# of Sites*				
	DPS	Community Center-Based	Community Home-Based	Total	
				#	%
<b>1-9</b>	1	99	21	<b>121</b>	<b>46.8%</b>
<b>10-24</b>	9	41	0	<b>50</b>	<b>19.3%</b>
<b>25-49</b>	46	12	0	<b>58</b>	<b>22.4%</b>
<b>50-99</b>	23	4	0	<b>27</b>	<b>10.4%</b>
<b>100 or more</b>	2	0	0	<b>2</b>	<b>0.007%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*This analysis is based on enrollment records, not provider records. Thus, preschools that did not enroll any students as of October 14, 2012 were not included even if they are DPP preschools. Missing records were not included.

### Number and Quality of Sites

While 82 percent of DPP preschool sites were three- or four-star-rated Qualistar programs in 2013, quality ratings varied substantially by the type of preschool. The vast majority of DPS preschools, 95 percent, were rated three or four stars, while 80 percent of community center-based preschools and just 52 percent of home-based preschools were rated three or four stars. Of the home-based preschool providers, 14 percent 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.

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<sup>5</sup> 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.

**Table 2**

<b>DPP Providers by Provider Type and Qualistar Rating in 2013*</b>								
<b>Star Rating</b>	<b>DPS</b>		<b>Community Center-Based</b>		<b>Community Home-Based</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>1 Star</b>	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	4.8%	1	0.4%
<b>2 Star</b>	4	5.1%	19	12.4%	4	19.0%	27	10.7%
<b>3 Star</b>	49	62.8%	80	52.3%	9	42.9%	138	54.8%
<b>4 Star</b>	25	32.1%	42	27.5%	2	9.5%	69	27.4%
<b>Intro to Quality</b>	0	0.0%	10	6.5%	3	14.3%	13	5.2%
<b>Provisional</b>	0	0.0%	2	1.3%	2	9.5%	4	1.6%
<b>Missing</b>	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\*This analysis is based on provider records.

The vast majority of students in both community and DPS preschools were enrolled in three- or four-star-rated programs. Ninety-six percent of students who attended DPS preschools and 93 percent of students who attended community center-based preschools - a 10 percent increase over 2012 - were enrolled at three- or four-star-rated preschools in 2013. Sixty-one percent of the students enrolled in home-based preschools were enrolled in three- or four-star-rated preschools.

An important indicator of DPP's success is the growing number of students enrolled in high-quality preschool programs. As illustrated below, in 2008, 575 DPP students were enrolled in a three- or four-star-rated program; by 2013, 4,845 students were enrolled in three- or four-star-rated programs. As the number of students participating in DPP has increased, the percentage of students enrolled in three- and four-star programs has remained relatively stable, being around 90 percent of total students. These data also show a steady decline in the number of one-star-rated sites across the city over the past four years, with only 0.1 percent of preschools receiving this rating in 2013. Below, Table 3 shows the comparisons of DPP students by star rating across all school years, and Figure 2 presents a graph reflecting this data.

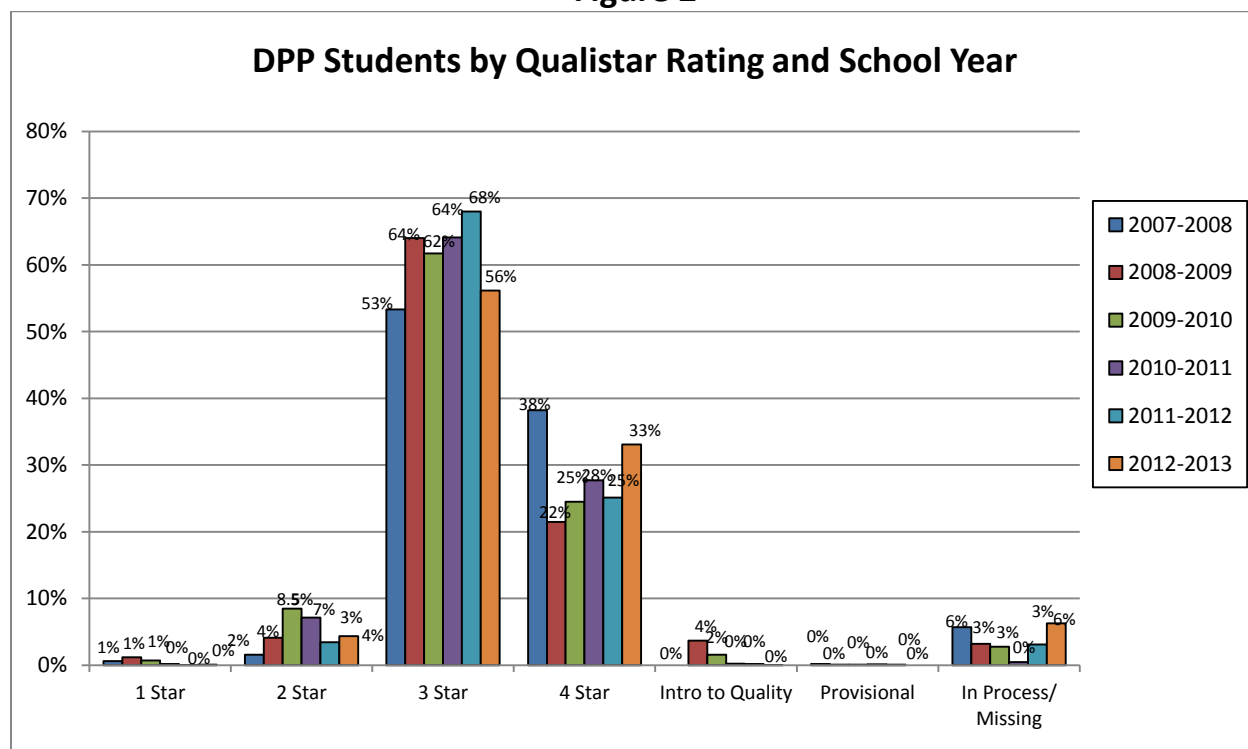


Table 3

DPP Students by Qualistar Rating and School Year										
Star Rating	07-08	08-09	2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012		2012-2013	
	%	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1 Star	0.6%	1.2%	43	0.7%	11	0.2%	3	0.1%	4	0.1%
2 Star	1.6%	4.1%	504	8.5%	423	7.2%	177	3.4%	238	4.4%
3 Star	53.3%	64.0%	3,654	61.7%	3,792	64.1%	3,481	68.0%	3,048	56.1%
4 Star	38.2%	21.5%	1,451	24.5%	1,639	27.7%	1,287	25.1%	1,797	33.1%
Intro to Quality	0.0%	3.7%	97	1.6%	14	0.2%	9	0.2%	3	0.1%
Provisional	0.2%	0.1%	6	0.1%	8	0.1%	4	0.1%	0	0.0%
In Process/ Missing	5.7%	3.2%	166	2.8%	28	0.5%	158	3.1%	341	6.3%
Total	100%	100%	5,921	100%	5,915	100%	5,119	100%	5,431*	100%

\*For 2012-13, 36 children were enrolled in two different providers each with different ratings and these children are not included in this analysis. Another 42 students were enrolled in two different preschools with the same rating. These 42 students were included in the analysis.

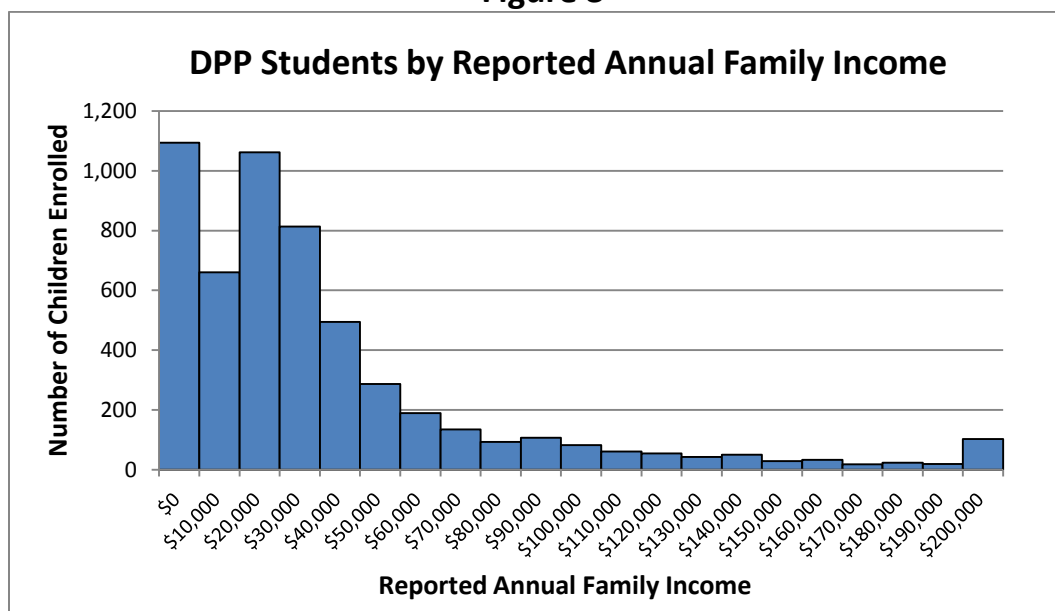
Figure 2



## Family Income

In 2013, DPP continued to serve Denver's lowest income families. Approximately 52 percent of DPP families reported annual family incomes of less than \$30,000. Only 16 percent of families reported an annual family income of \$70,000 or higher. Figure 3 presents the distribution of children served by DPP in 2013 by annual family income.

**Figure 3**



## Primary Home Language

Families that speak English as their primary home language represented the majority of the DPP population in 2013, comprising 65 percent of all students, up from 58 percent in 2012. Approximately 23 percent of the families enrolled in DPP during the 2013 school year reported speaking Spanish at home primarily, down from 32 percent in 2012. The remaining 12 percent of families speak more than one language at home, speak a primary language other than English or Spanish, or did not report their primary home language. Table 4 below details DPP 2013 enrollment by the language spoken at home.

**Table 4**

<b>DPP Students by Home Language in 2012-13</b>		
<b>Primary Home Language</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
English	3,560	65.1%
Spanish	1,246	22.8%
Vietnamese	11	0.2%
Arabic	19	0.3%
Multi-Lingual	0	0.0%
Other Language	502	9.2%
Not Provided	129	2.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,467</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### Race/Ethnicity

The racial/ethnic distribution of children participating in the program this year largely continued the distribution of previous years. However, the percentage of participants reporting “other” race/ethnicity or not reporting race/ethnicity increased in 2013 after declining from 2009 to 2012. In 2013, Hispanic children continued to lead all other race/ethnicity groups in DPP participation with 50 percent of the total DPP enrollment. White children represented 25 percent, and black children represented 13 percent of enrollees. Table 5 below details the race/ethnicity of children enrolled in DPP across all years of the program.

**Table 5**

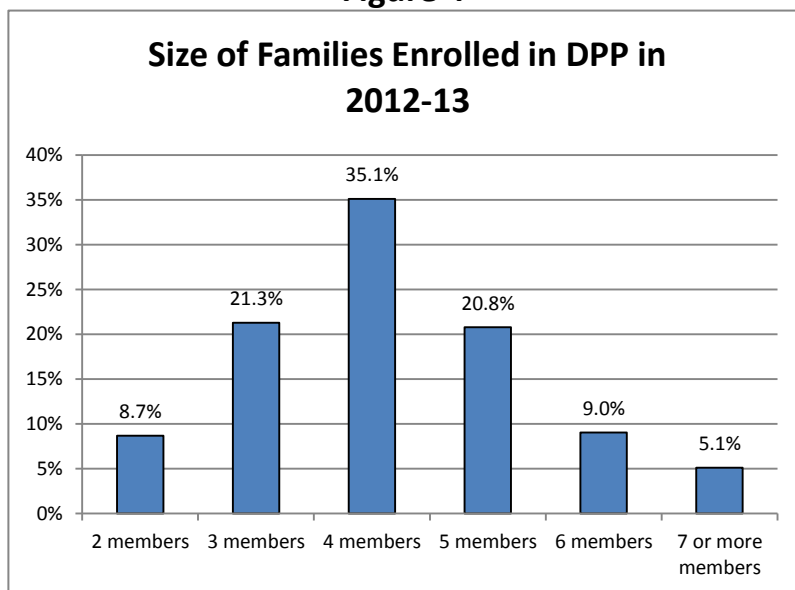
<b>DPP Students by Child's Ethnicity and School Year</b>										
<b>Child's Ethnicity</b>	<b>07-08</b>	<b>08-09</b>	<b>2009-2010</b>		<b>2010-2011</b>		<b>2011-2012</b>		<b>2012-2013</b>	
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Asian</b>	2.4%	2.9%	186	3.1%	190	3.2%	160	3.1%	183	3.3%
<b>Black</b>	9.4%	12.9%	741	12.5%	788	13.3%	648	12.6%	715	13.1%
<b>Hispanic</b>	54.8%	51.8%	2,918	49.3%	3,017	51.0%	2,690	52.5%	2,727	49.9%
<b>Native American</b>	0.8%	1.1%	49	0.8%	50	0.8%	52	1.0%	48	0.9%
<b>Multi-Racial</b>	4.3%	3.5%	301	5.1%	257	4.3%	221	4.3%	0	0.0%
<b>White</b>	21.8%	20.5%	1,621	27.4%	1,563	26.4%	1,334	26.0%	1,376	25.2%
<b>Other/ Missing/Not Provided</b>	6.5%	7.3%	105	1.8%	50	0.8%	23	0.4%	418	7.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,921</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,915</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,128</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,467</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Family Size

The distribution of students according to family size is presented in Table 6. Family size distribution in the program for 2013 looks similar to the distributions over the past four years.

**Table 6**

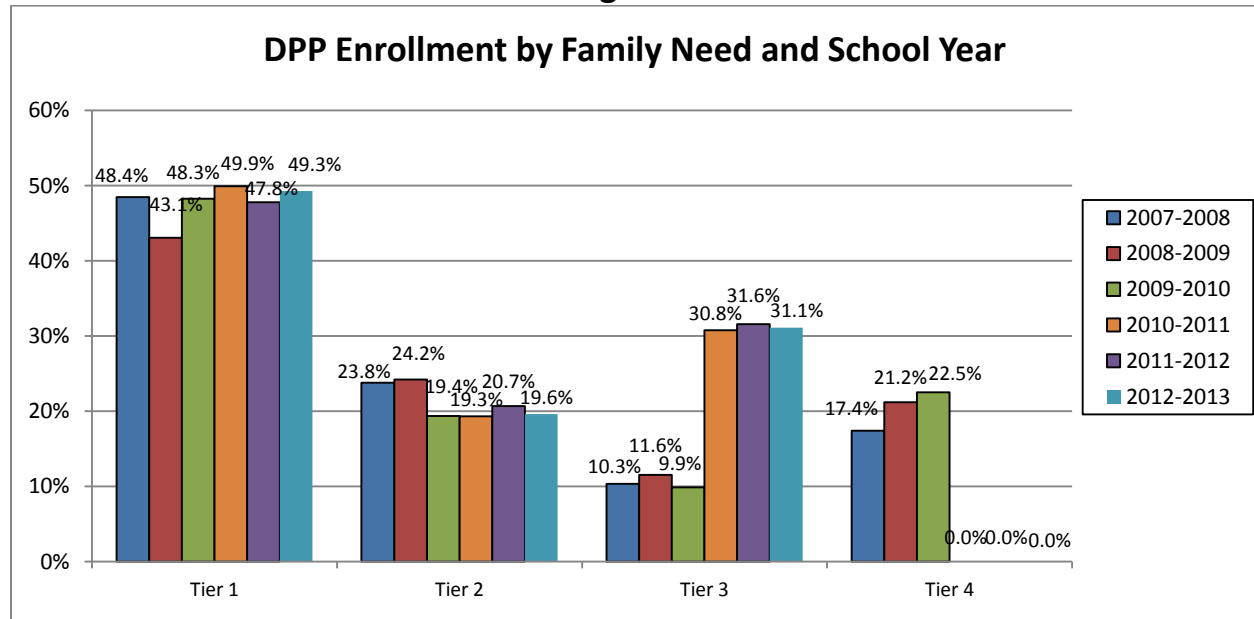
Size of Families Enrolled in DPP in 2013		
Family Size	#	%
2 members	474	8.68%
3 members	1162	21.27%
4 members	1918	35.11%
5 members	1135	20.78%
6 members	494	9.04%
7 or more members	280	5.13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,463</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 4**

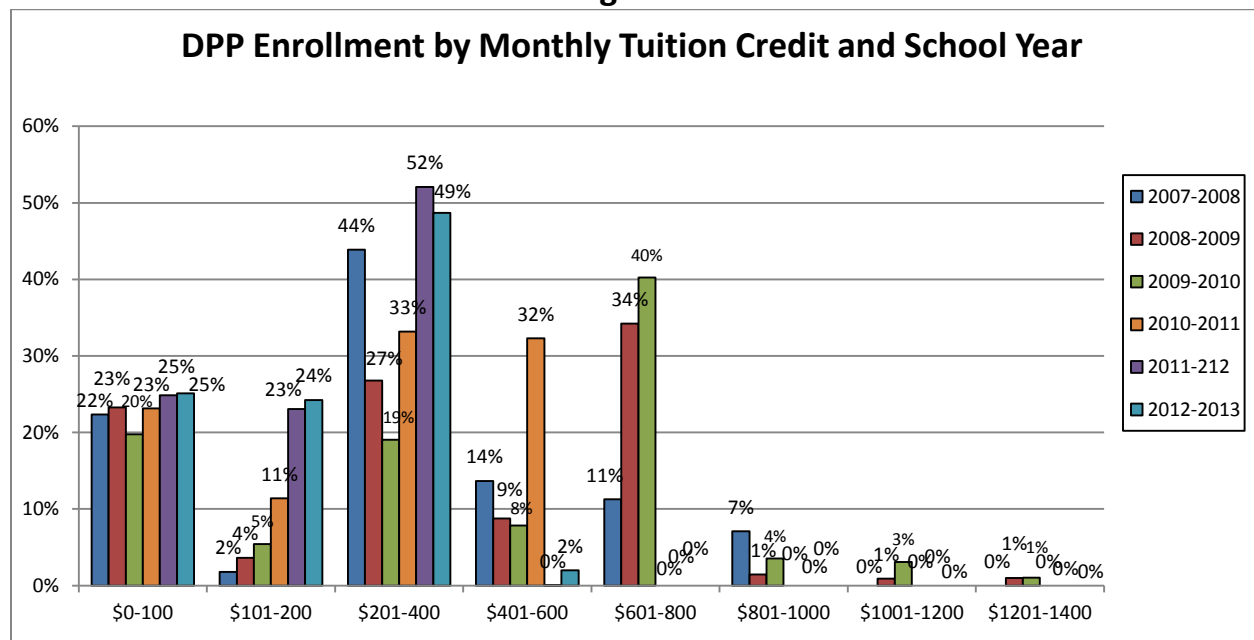
### Level of Family Need (Income Tier Adjusted by Family Size)

In order to estimate each family's *need* for tuition credits, DPP looks at two factors: annual family income and family size. DPP organizes the resulting income index into six categories or tiers. Figure 4 below presents the enrollment of DPP families by family need. Tier 1 indicates the families with the highest need, and Tier 4 indicates the families with the lowest need for tuition credits. In all years of DPP operation, the greatest percentage of families enrolled in DPP were in Tier 1, indicating families with a relatively high need for tuition credits.

The comparatively small difference between Tiers 3, 4, 5, and 6, has led the evaluators to conclude 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 4 below, with original Tiers 3, 4, 5, and 6 becoming the new Tier 3 and the original Tier 7 becoming Tier 4. Since 2011, no students have fallen into the revised Tier 4 because the original Tier 7 category was eliminated. In Figure 5, please recall that *family need* refers to income **and** family size, and therefore, is not strictly comparable to income tiers alone.

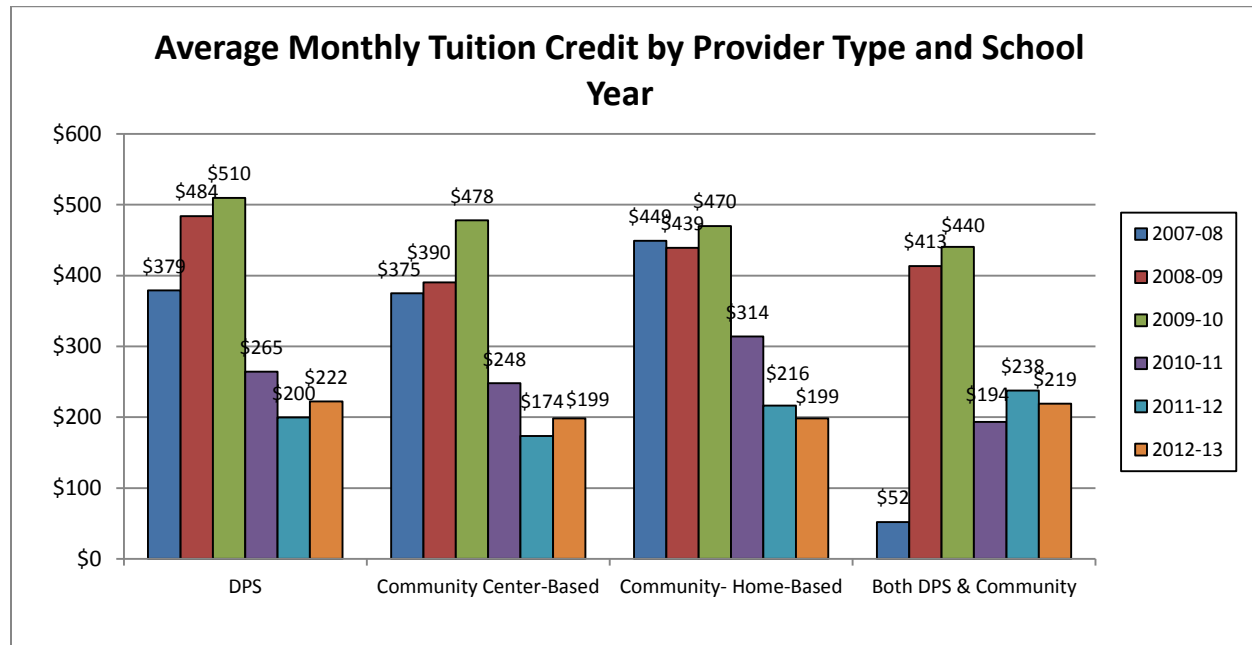
**Figure 5**

The calculation of a monthly tuition credit takes into account three factors: (1) The quality of the preschool as defined by the Qualistar rating or accreditation; (2) The hours that a child attends preschool; and (3) The family need as determined by the original tier income system discussed above. Figure 6 shows the distribution of approved monthly tuition credit amounts across the past five academic years. It is important to note that due to financial constraints of the program, the maximum tuition credit awarded has been reduced from a high of \$1,400 in the first years of the program, down to \$539 in 2011, \$374 in 2012, and \$419 in 2013.

**Figure 6**

As a result of the financial constraints experienced by DPP, the average monthly tuition credit decreased sharply after 2010. In 2013, the average credit did increase for families in the lowest two income tiers, compared to 2012. Figure 7 below shows the average monthly tuition credits since 2008. The decreases in average monthly tuition credit in the past 3 years appear to have had little, if any, impact on enrollment, with final enrollment figures since 2010 stable at just under 6,000 children. According to the most recent American Community Survey, there are approximately 8,148 children in their year before pre-K in Denver, meaning that DPP's enrollment covers almost 70 percent of all eligible children, a figure in line with the target set for the program when the ballot initiative was proposed in 2006.

**Figure 7**



## IV. 2013 Evaluation Key Findings

A number of evaluation questions were developed by DPP and the evaluation team in the fall of 2007, designed to track the effectiveness of the theory of action for the DPP program. These questions have guided the yearly evaluations of the program and will continue to do so over the next four years. The full list of evaluation questions and the related findings for 2013 from the parent and provider surveys can be found in Appendix A.

This section highlights the key findings identified through the 2013 evaluation responses, which break down into four areas:

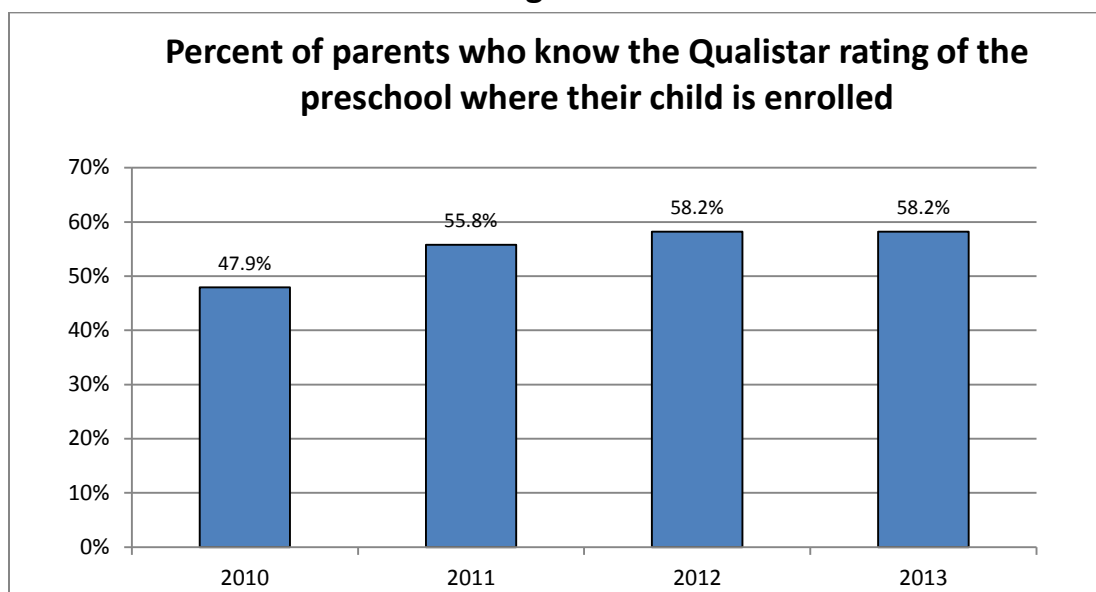
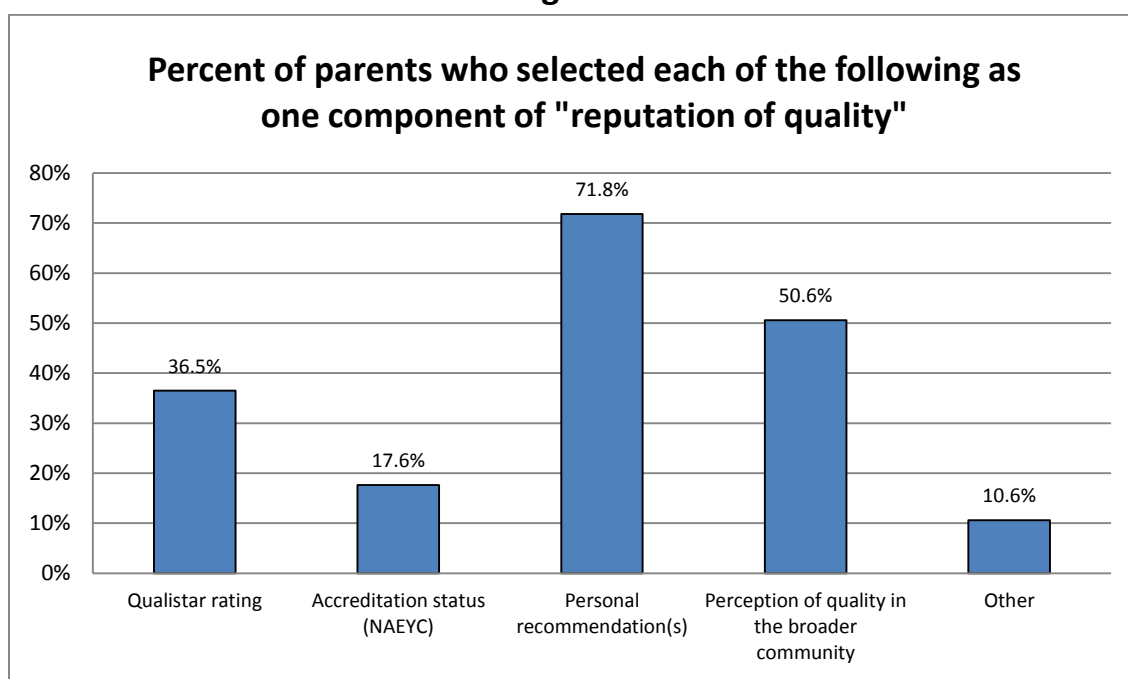
1. Quality
2. Benefit of Preschool and DPP
3. Operations
4. Communications

### Quality

One of DPP's key goals is to raise the level of preschool quality in Denver. This has primarily taken the form of DPP providing assistance and incentives to programs to become Qualistar rated, or achieve similar accreditation. A number of questions in both the parent and provider surveys focused on preschool quality in general and on Qualistar in particular.

### Qualistar

The program data presented in the prior section illustrates that the Qualistar rating of Denver preschools has improved over time and that the vast majority of DPP preschool students are in a highly rated program. However, the 2013 evaluation results show a mixed response from parents and providers to the Qualistar rating. As Figure 8 below illustrates, nearly 60 percent of parents know the Qualistar rating of their child's preschool, a figure that has remained fairly constant over the past three years. However, as Figure 9 illustrates, only 36.5 percent of parents selected the Qualistar rating as a component of "reputation of quality," a decrease of nearly 14 percent compared to 2012. As it has in previous years, "personal recommendation" was selected by a large majority of parents as being a key component of quality.

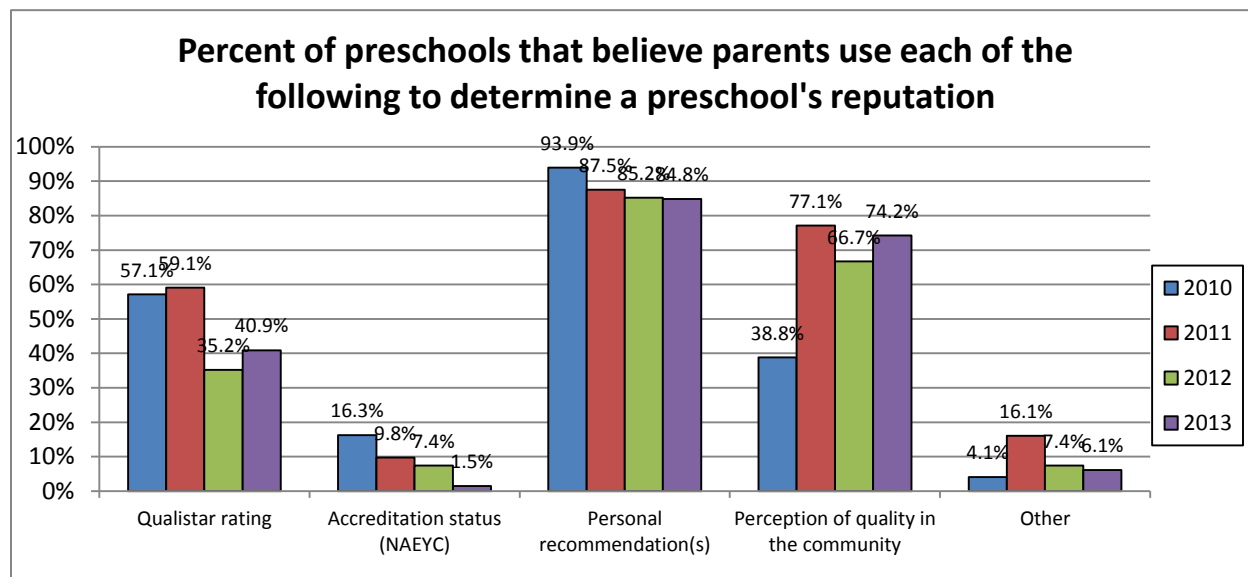
**Figure 8****Figure 9**

The survey results also show the factors that providers believe parents use when determining the reputation of a preschool. As illustrated in Figure 10, 41 percent of providers believe parents use the Qualistar rating to determine preschool reputation, an increase from 2012, while only 1.5 percent of providers believe that parents use a center's accreditation status to determine quality. Providers rightly believe (based on parent survey results) that parents use personal recommendations as the most



important aspect when determining a preschool's reputation, while an increasing number of providers believe "perception of quality in the community" is a determining factor.

**Figure 10**

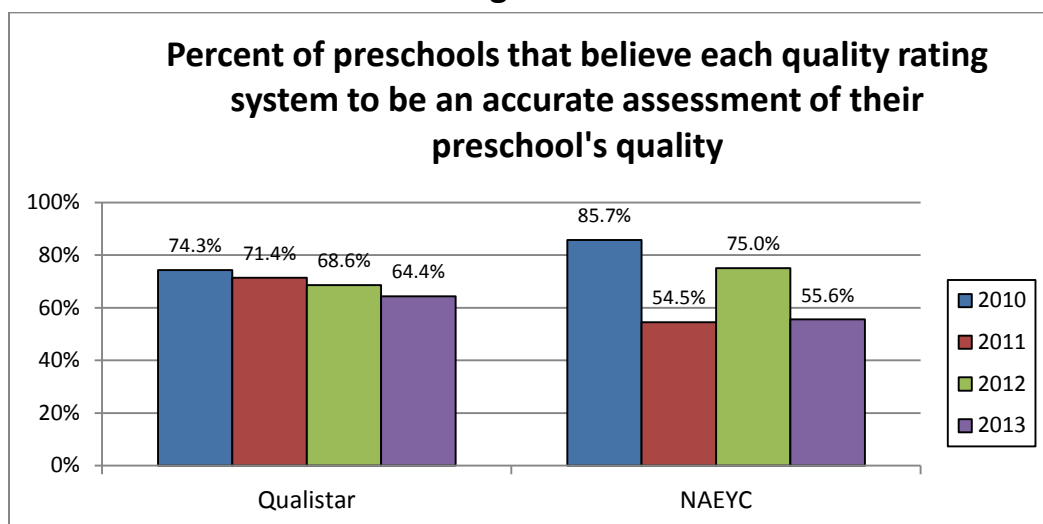


It is interesting to note that at the same time fewer parents are citing the Qualistar rating as a component of quality, fewer providers are also saying that their Qualistar rating is an accurate assessment of their preschool's quality. Figure 11 shows that the number of providers who believe Qualistar is an accurate assessment of their preschool's quality has decreased 10 percent since 2010. Following is a brief selection of provider quotes from survey comments, which is illustrative of the criticism many providers had of Qualistar:

*"[V]ery little of what they found lacking had anything to do with instruction, relationships, quality of the education -- it certainly did not give us guidance or direction in improving the quality of our program."*

*"I do not believe that Qualistar's rating gives an accurate assessment of our program because of how little it focuses on academics."*

*"[T]he Qualistar rating doesn't reflect the direct interactions between staff and children, which is especially important in both providing a feeling of safety, security, and enthusiasm for learning; and in assisting a child's development of language and social-emotional skills."*

**Figure 11**

### Parent Perception of Quality

Five years of data from parent surveys shows relative consistency over time in the most important qualities looked for by parents during preschool visits, as illustrated in Figure 12. Notable changes in 2013 are the increase in the percentage of parents citing “qualified teachers” as the most important quality, as well as an increase in those selecting “diversity,” “parent involvement,” and “friendly and knowledgeable leadership.” Figure 13 illustrates that providers have a relatively accurate perception of parent priorities, with providers increasingly selecting “qualified teachers” as the most important quality parents look for during site visits.

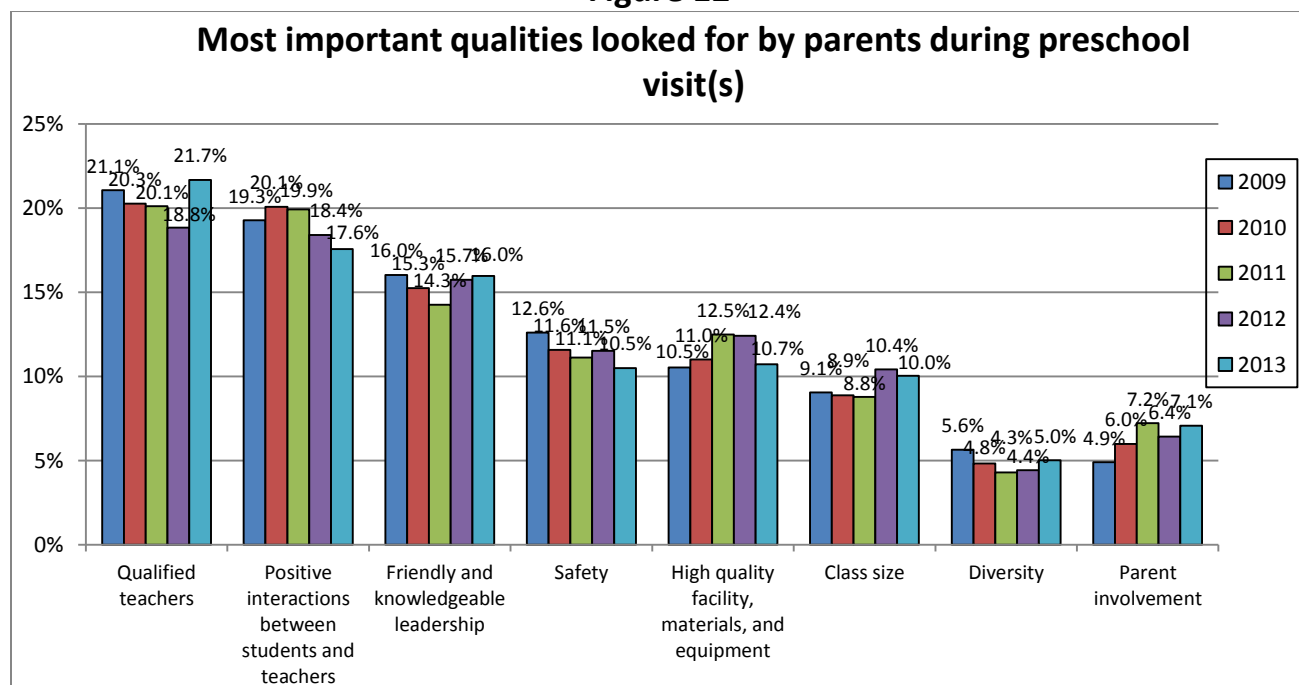
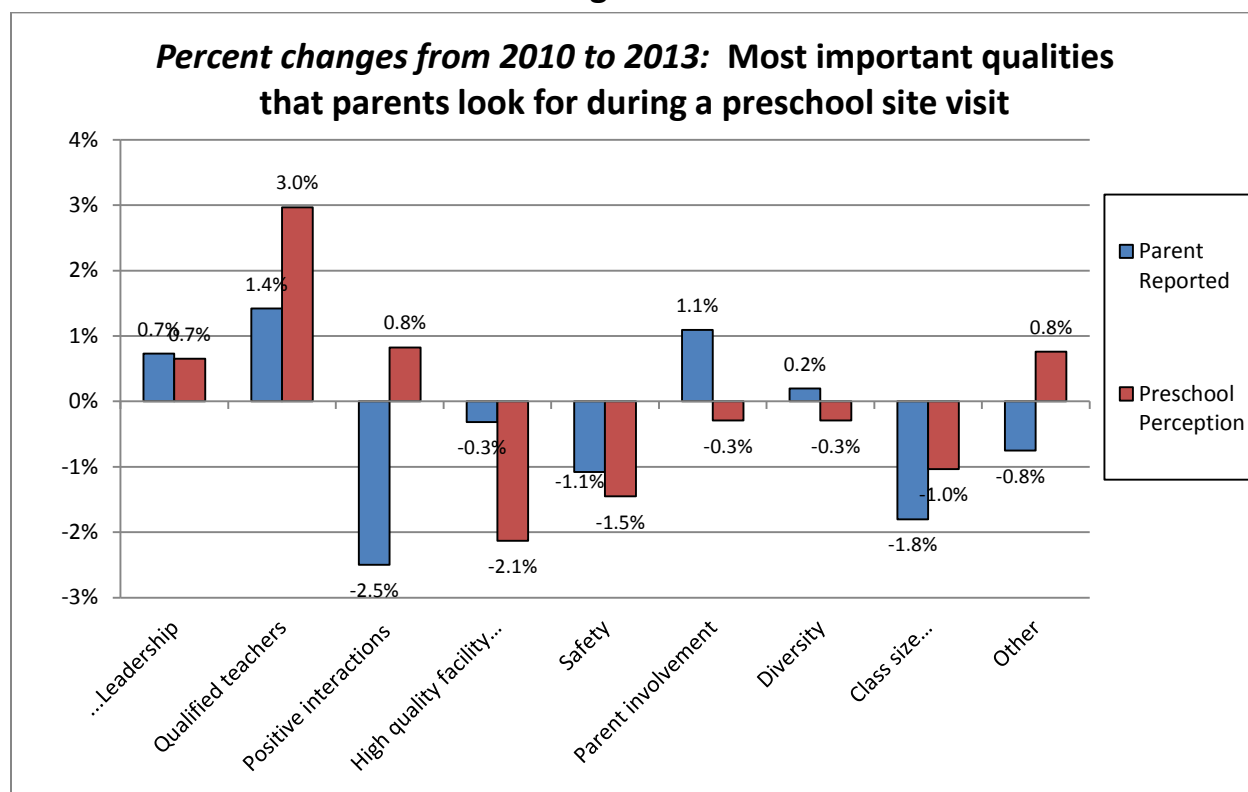
**Figure 12**

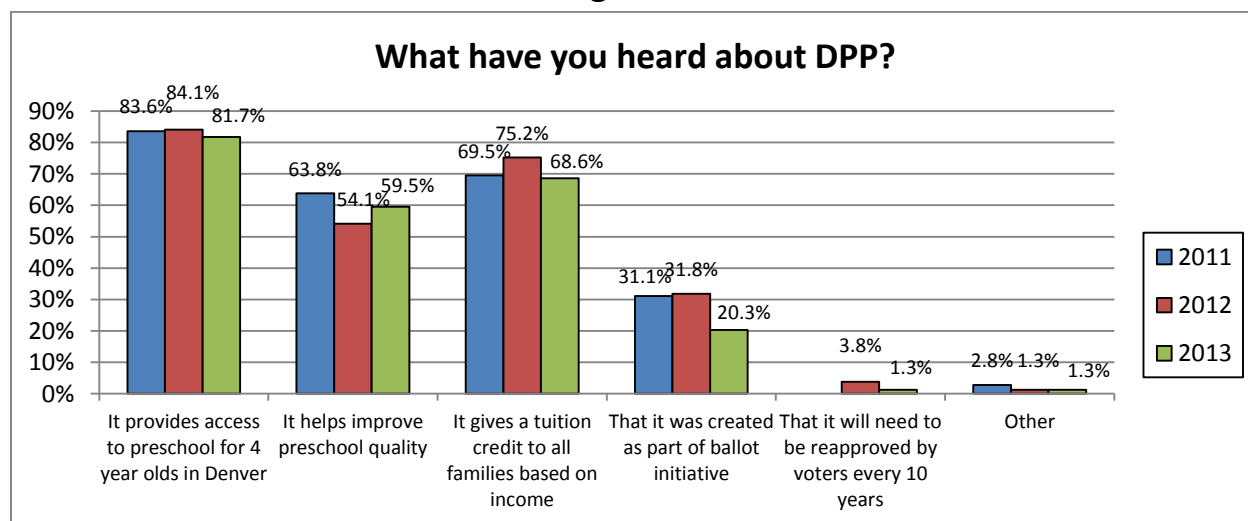
Figure 13



#### DPP Quality Improvement System

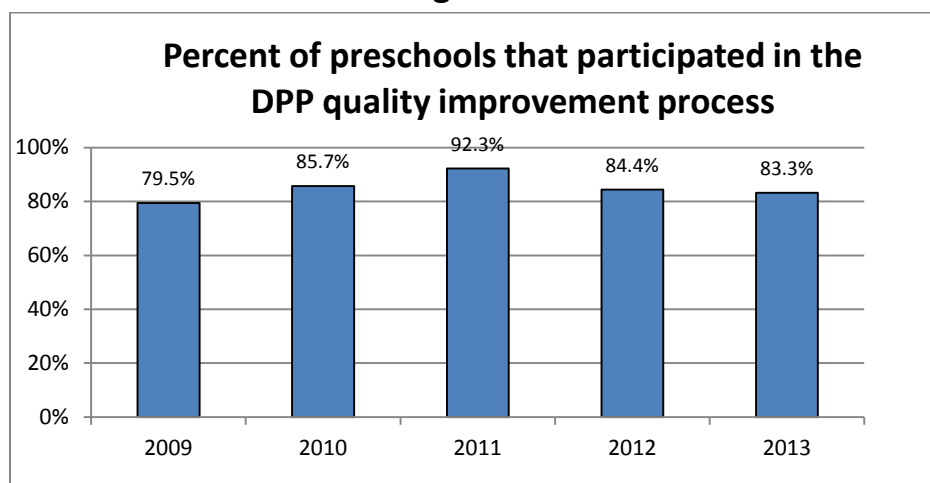
DPP helps to improve the quality of Denver preschools through its Quality Improvement (QI) system. Figure 14 shows that an increasing number of parents are aware that DPP “helps improve preschool quality,” with nearly 60 percent of parents reporting this in 2013, up from 54 percent in 2012.

Figure 14



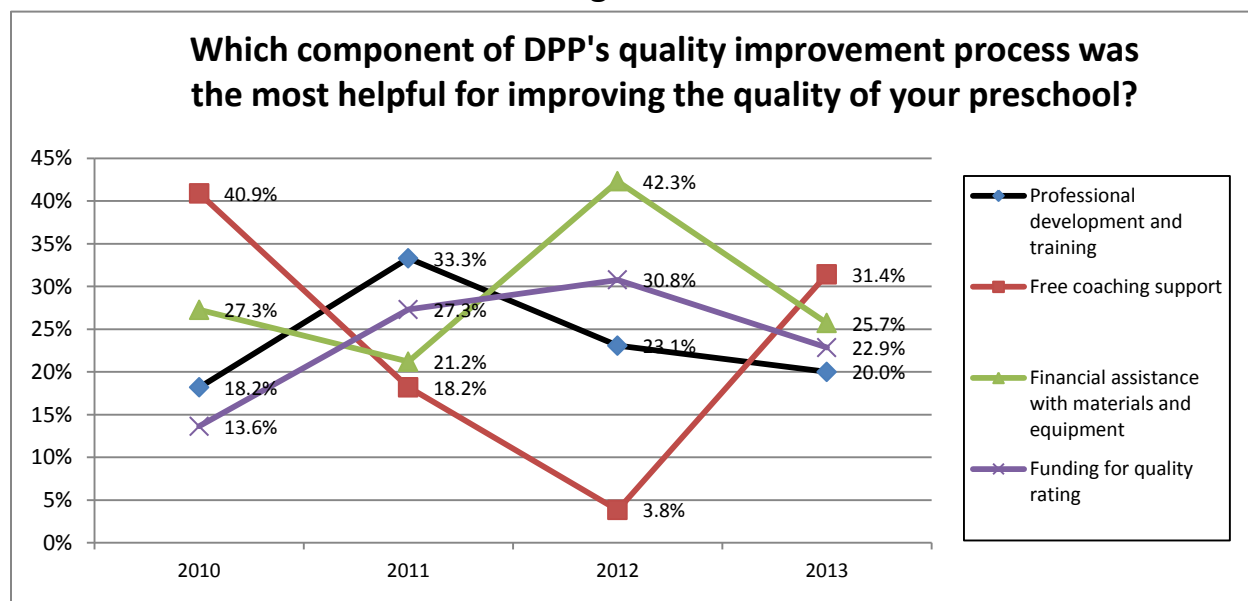
In 2013, over 80 percent of preschools reported taking advantage of the DPP quality improvement process and resources, a figure that has been consistent over the duration of the program (Figure 15). The QI process includes providing access to professional development, financial assistance for materials or equipment, coaching support and funding for the quality rating process. As part of the QI process, coaching support was rated as the “most helpful support in improving quality” in 2013, with over 31 percent of respondents selecting this component, an increase of almost 28 percent over 2012. The “financial assistance for materials and equipment” and “funding for quality rating” components both decreased over prior years (Figure 16).

Figure 15



\*We did not ask this question to DPS sites after 2010 as they participate in a DPS quality improvement process.

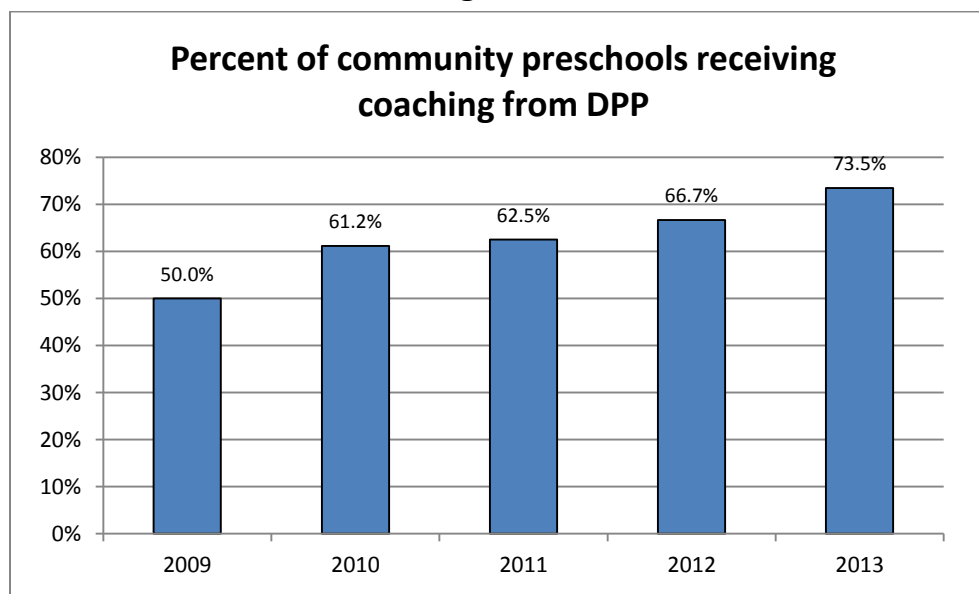
Figure 16



\*We did not ask this question to DPS sites after 2010 as they participate in a DPS quality improvement process.

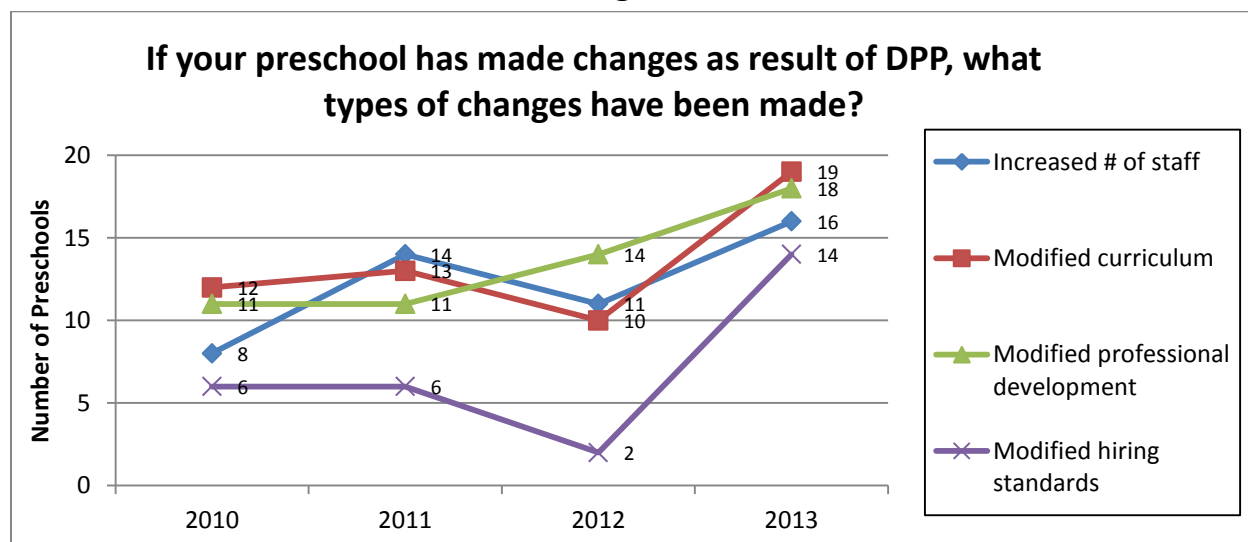
The number of preschools receiving coaching from DPP has steadily increased over the duration of the program, increasing 7 percent, to over 73 percent in 2013 (Figure 17). Clearly the coaching support offered by DPP is both a valuable resource to providers and a widely used one.

**Figure 17**



As part of DPP's push to improve quality, preschools are increasingly making changes to benefit children. Figure 18 illustrates the key changes preschools have made as a result of DPP. As can be seen, 2013 saw an increase in all of the categories, with preschools increasing their staff levels, modifying hiring standards and professional development, and changing their curricula.

**Figure 18**



As 2012 was the first year DPP rolled out its new QI system the evaluation team conducted a small number of provider interviews to gather further information on the new QI system and DPP's impact on quality overall. Through these interviews we learned that providers' perceptions of preschool quality and DPP's influence on quality vary considerably, and these opinions vary largely by provider size and level of quality improvement support accessed. Several items were universally reported as affecting preschool quality, including: (1) the environment rating scales being helpful in cleaning up provider practices, (2) the re-rating process, and DPP paying for the re-rating, were critical elements in raising the quality of programs on a permanent basis; (3) the CLASS assessment measurements felt authentic to providers and staff; and (4) the concept of preschool quality is in clearer focus today than it was five years ago. Regarding the DPP system of support, in general, providers thought that DPP had put in place several critical elements of quality. These include having a rating system, being clear that the rating system and periodic re-rating were both important, and offering critical resources for materials and professional development. Each of these was important but in combination, they were critical. DPP also was acknowledged for the coaching it offers, for exploring the CLASS system, and for keeping interested providers up to date on where it was and where it was heading. A full report on these interviews is included in Appendix I.

#### *Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Rating System*

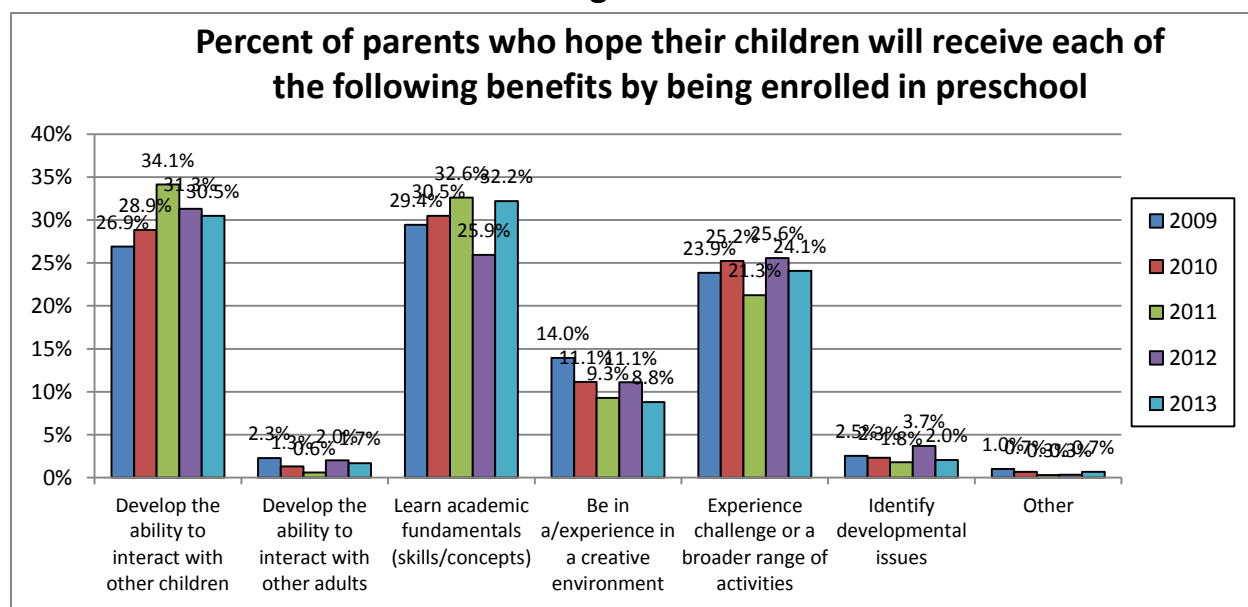
In order to address some of the criticisms of the Qualistar rating and in order to enhance the DPP quality rating system, DPP piloted the use of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) rating tool in 2012-13 and is set to roll it out program-wide in 2013-14. CLASS focuses on teacher-student interactions, organized into three broad domains: (1) emotional support; (2) classroom organization; and (3) instructional support. The focus on teacher-student interactions makes CLASS a good complement to Qualistar, which focuses more heavily on the learning environment.

## Benefits of Preschool and DPP

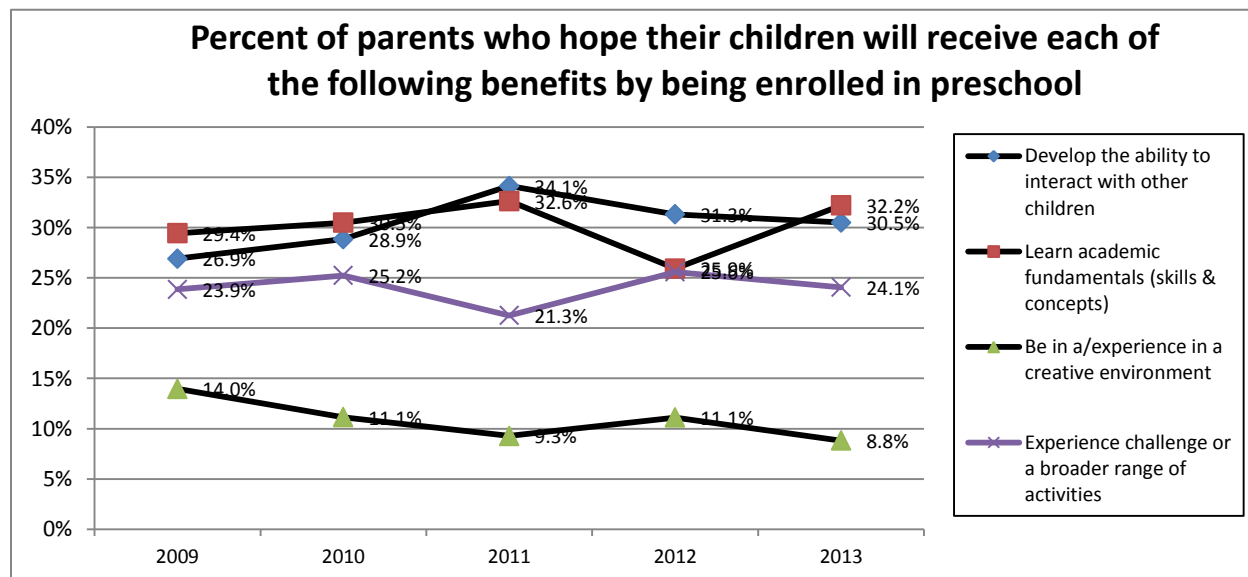
### Benefits for Students

Attending preschool continues to provide students with multiple benefits, according to parent data, with this year's results illustrating that parents continue to value the benefit of their child being able to interact with other children, to learn academic fundamentals, and to experience challenge, as can be seen in Figure 19 and 20. After a drop in 2012, the number of parents citing "learn academic fundamentals" increased to be the highest rated benefit in 2013, at 32.2 percent, a figure more similar to 2010 and 2011 data.

**Figure 19**

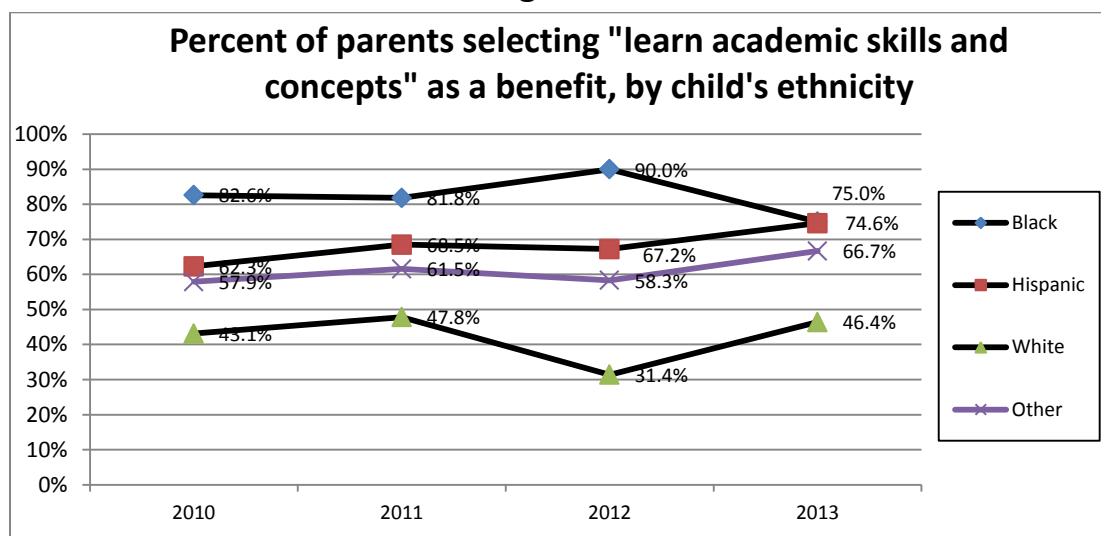


**Figure 20**



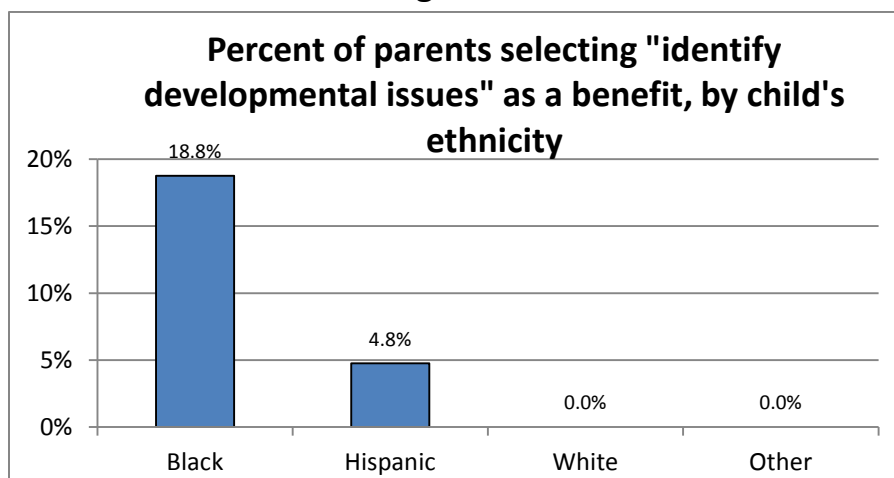
There was also less variation by ethnicity seen in the number of parents selecting “learn academic fundamentals” as a benefit of preschool, compared to previous years (Figure 21). Whereas in 2012, 90 percent of black parents selected this benefit, compared with only 67 percent of Hispanic and 31 percent of white parents, in 2013 this 60 percent spread had been reduced to 30 percent.

**Figure 21**



However, ethnic disparities do still exist. As seen in Figure 22, nearly 20 percent of black parents selected “identify developmental issues” as a benefit, compared to only 5 percent of Hispanic parents and zero percent of white families.

**Figure 22**

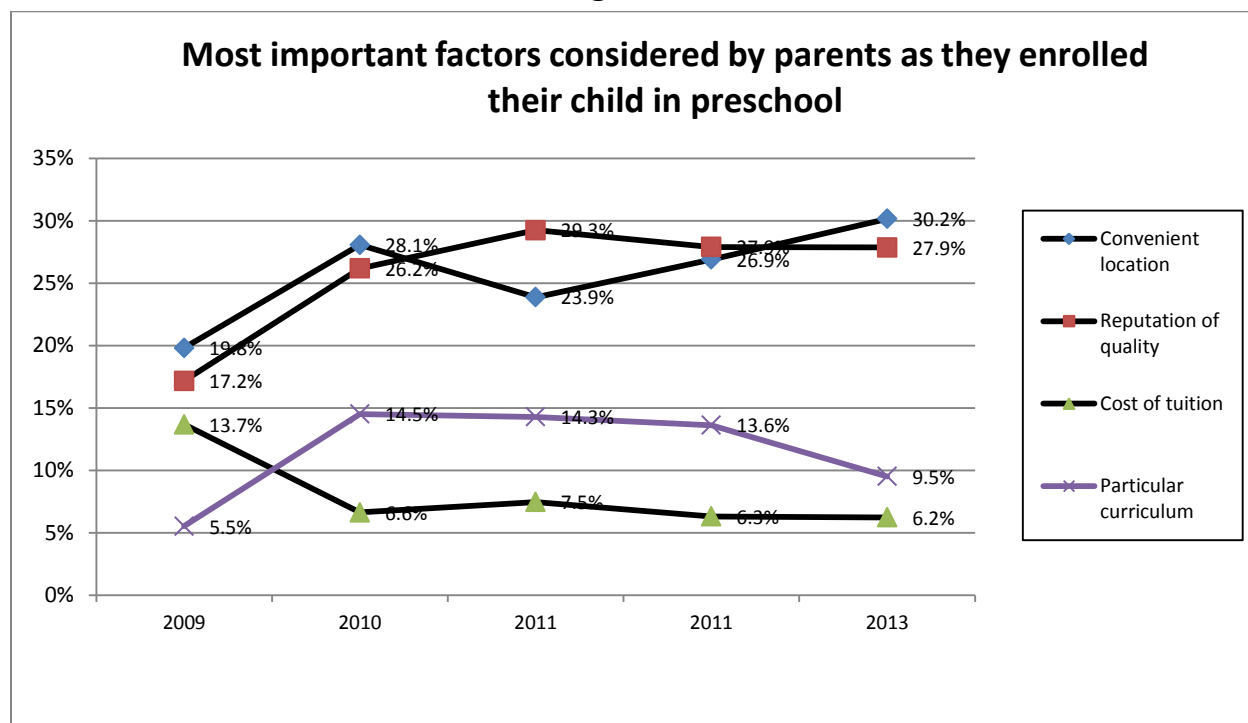


The data above shows what parents look for in preschool in general. When asked about the most important factors they look for when selecting an actual site for their child, the data shows that quality continues to be a key focus. As seen in Figure 23, continuing the trend over the life of the program, in 2013 over 30 percent of parents selected “convenient location” as an important factor when considering



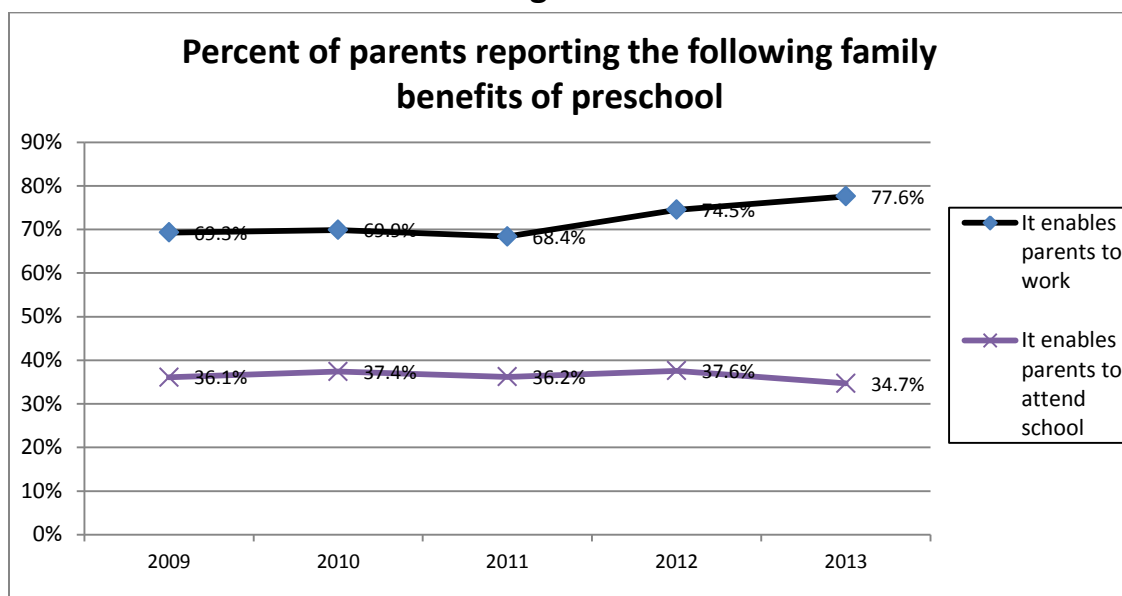
a preschool, and nearly 28 percent of parents selected “reputation of quality” as an important factor. This compares with only 9.5 percent of parents who consider a “particular curriculum” to be an important factor in their choice, and only 6.2 percent of parents who consider the “cost of tuition” as an important factor as they enroll their child in preschool.

**Figure 23**

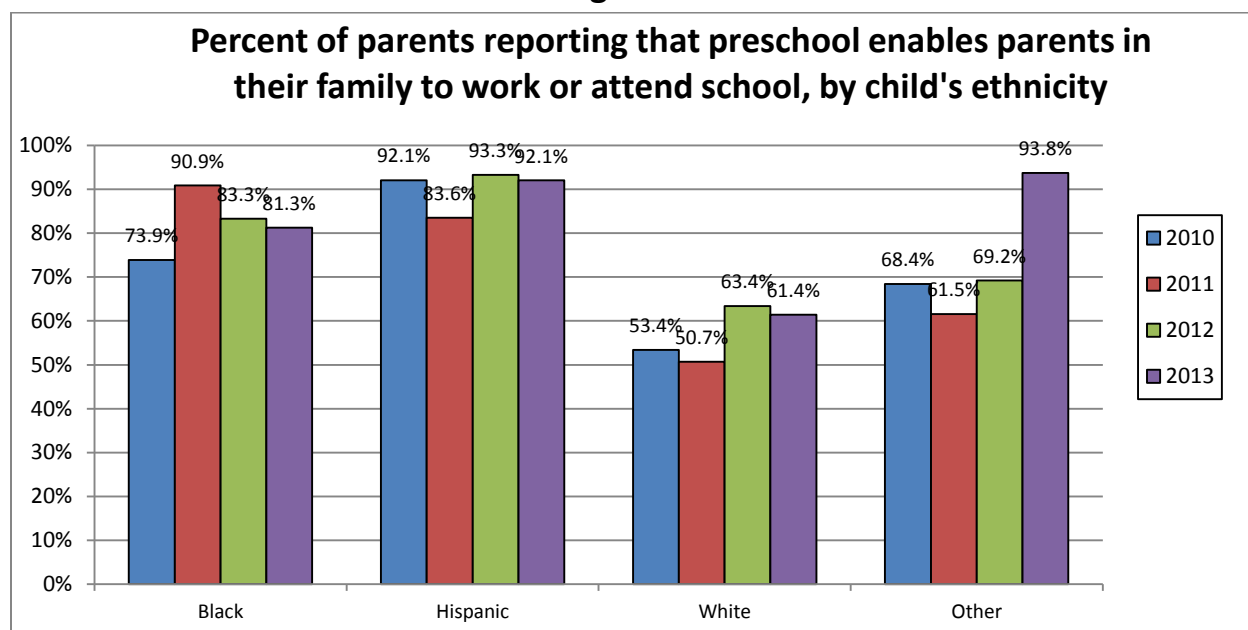


### Benefits for Parents

In addition to the benefits for students, preschool and DPP continue to offer benefits to parents. As shown in Figure 24, preschool continues to enable parents to work and/or attend school, with nearly 78 percent of parents reporting that preschool allows them to work.

**Figure 24**

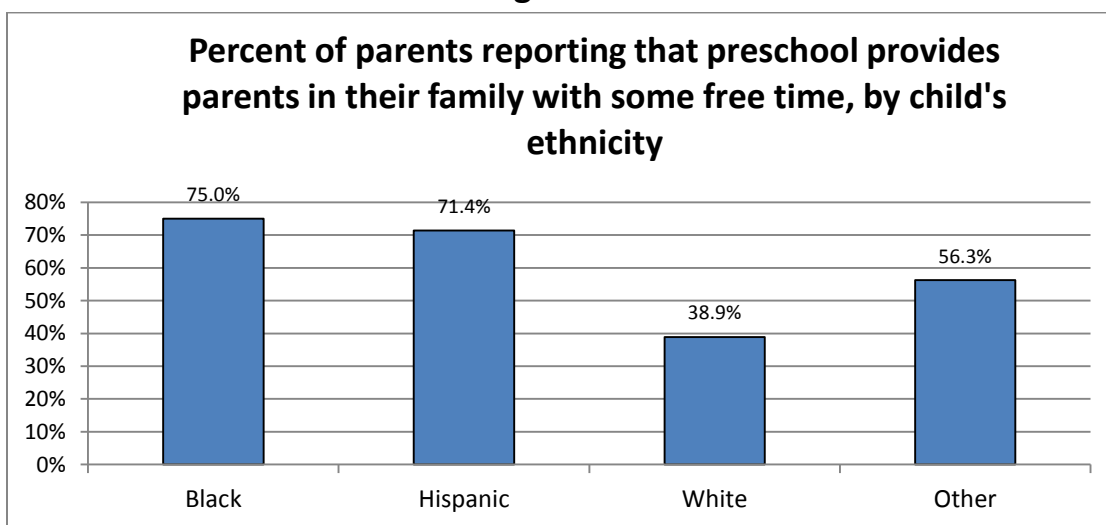
The data does show a decrease this year in the number of parents reporting that preschool allows them to attend school, particularly among Hispanic and black families (Figure 25).

**Figure 25**

In addition to work and school, parents also reported that preschool allows them more free time, although the data shows a large disparity between black or Hispanic families and white families. While

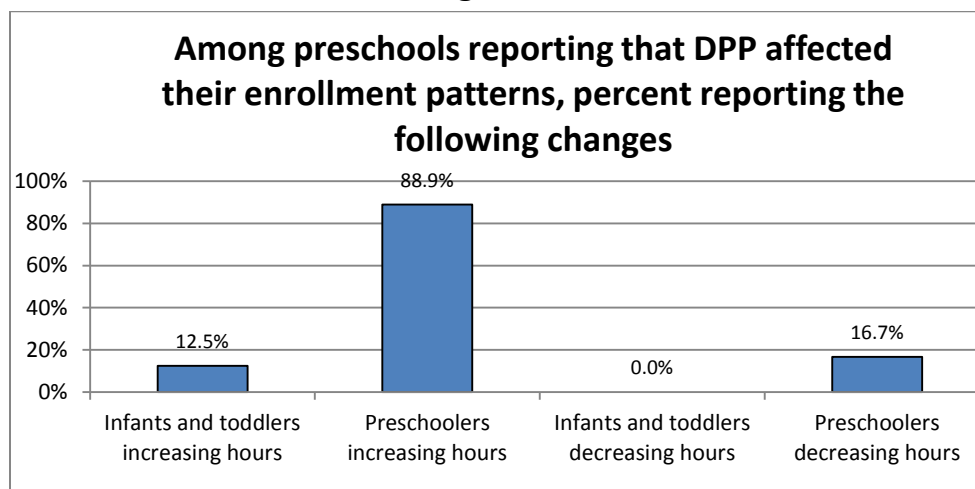
more than 70 percent of black and Hispanic families reported that preschool provides them with some free time, only 39 percent of white families report the same (Figure 26).

**Figure 26**



While many of these benefits are attributed to preschool generally, the data also shows nearly 90 percent of DPP providers reported that preschoolers increased their hours due to DPP (Figure 27); it follows that these increased hours due to DPP allow families to attend school, work, or have more free time.

**Figure 27**

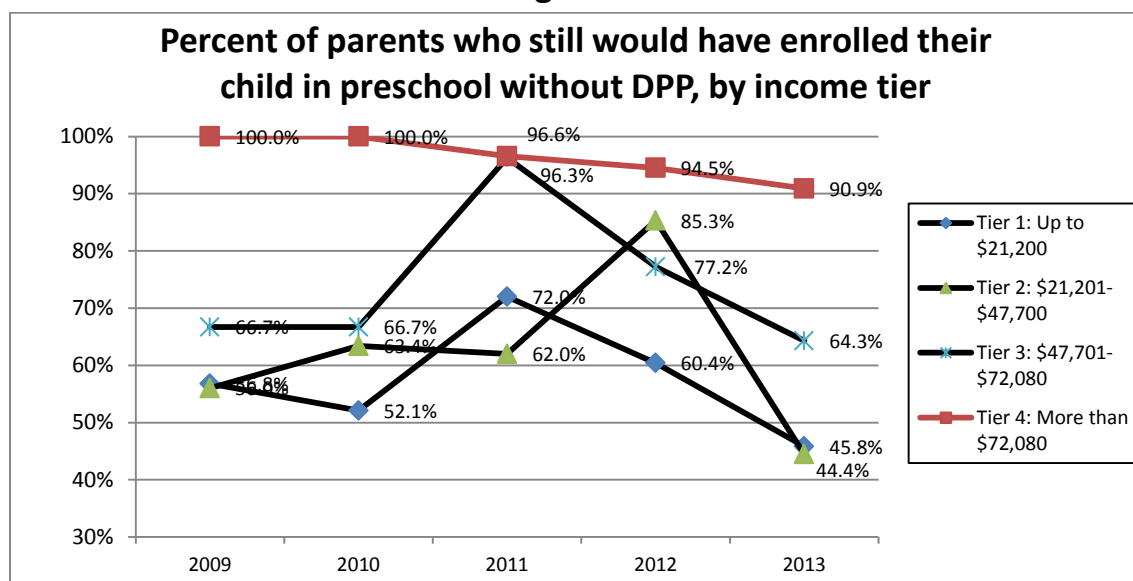


### *Impact of Tuition Credit*

At the core of DPP is the tuition credit that the program provides to parents to help with the cost of preschool. The impact of the tuition credits on enrollment has been tracked over the course of the program. Data from 2013 shows that the tuition credit continues to have a large impact on enrollment and the number of hours children are enrolled in preschool. Figure 28 illustrates that over 90 percent of

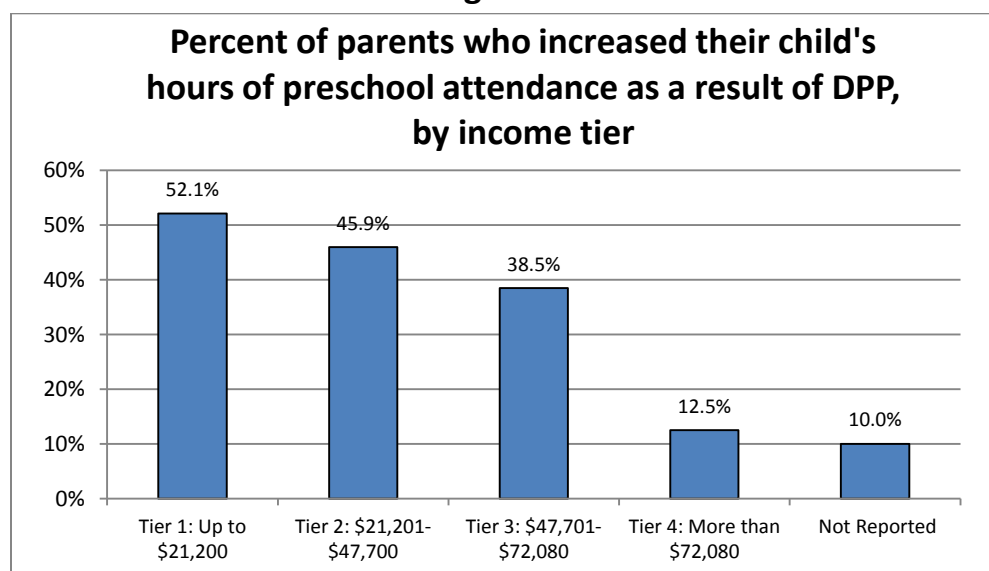
families in the Tier 4 income category (families earning over \$72,080 per year) would still have enrolled their child in preschool without DPP, a decrease from 95 percent in 2012. The number of lower income families (those in Tier 1, earning up to \$21,200 per year and those in Tier 2, earning between \$21,201 and \$47,700) reporting that they would still have enrolled their child in preschool without the DPP credit also decreased, to around 45 percent, from 85 percent for Tier 2 in 2012 and 60 percent for Tier 1. These data illustrate that without DPP, fewer families would be able to enroll their children in preschool, across all income tiers.

Figure 28



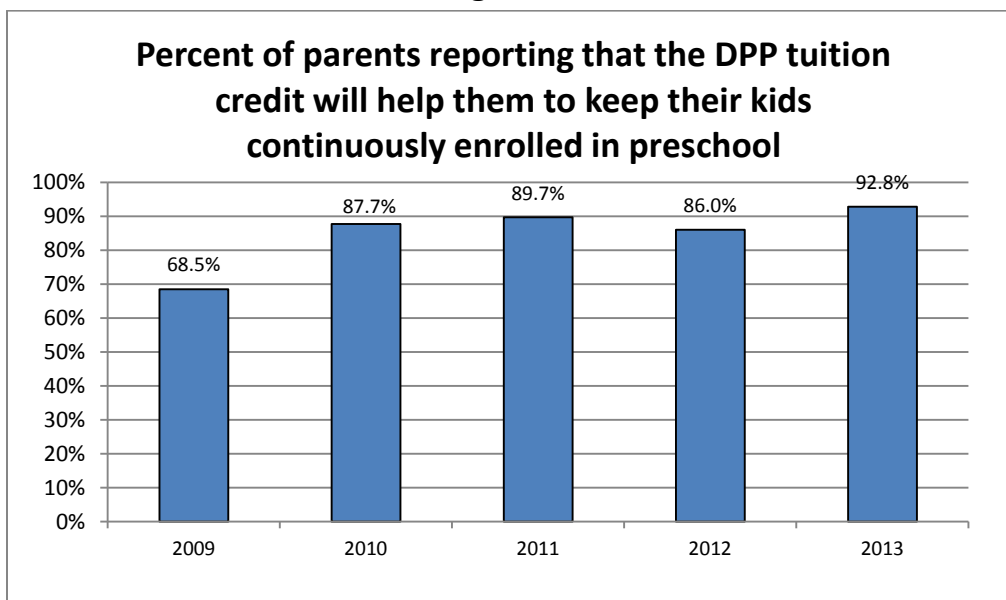
In addition, particularly for the lowest income families, the tuition credit plays an important role in allowing parents to increase the number of hours their child is enrolled in preschool, with over 50 percent of Tier 1 income parents increasing hours, compared to 13 percent of Tier 4 (Figure 29).

Figure 29



Finally, DPP has an increasing impact on continuous enrollment, with 93 percent of parents reporting that the tuition credit helps them keep their child continually enrolled, compared to just 69 percent in 2009 (Figure 30).

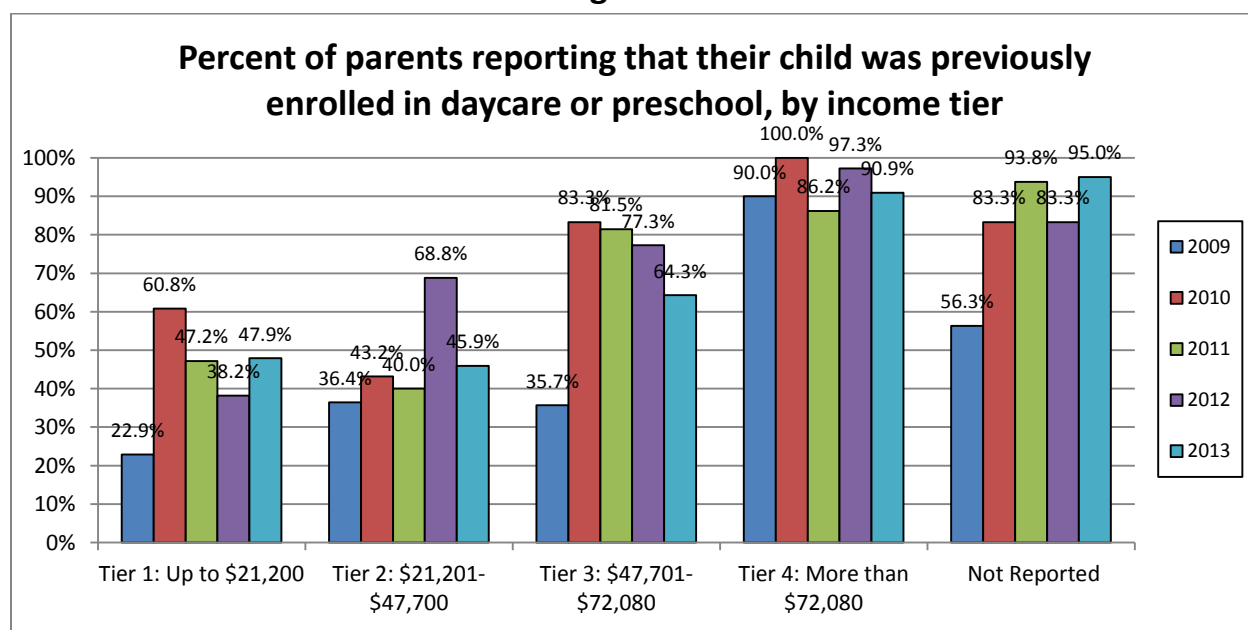
**Figure 30**



#### *Prior Enrollment in Preschool*

The number of parents reporting that their child was enrolled in daycare or preschool prior to DPP continues to vary widely by income tier. As seen in Figure 31, under 50 percent of income Tier 1 and 2 families had children previously enrolled, compared to 91 percent of Tier 4 families.

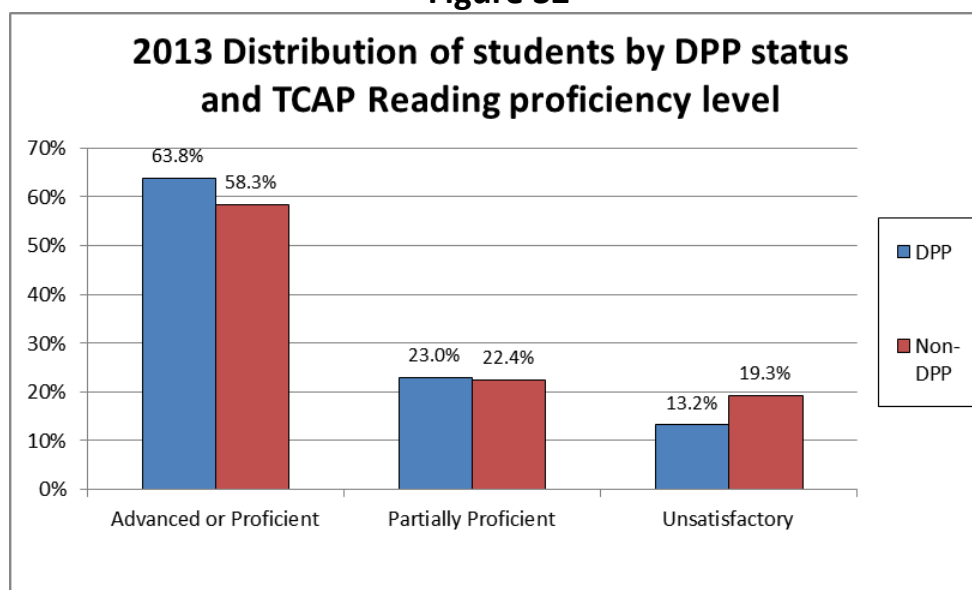
**Figure 31**



### *DPP Effect on 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Standardized Tests*

Since the 2008-09 school year, the evaluation team has carried out an evaluation of a sample that was representative of the population of children enrolled in DPP at that time. These children were assessed in the fall and spring of the preschool year on a variety of standardized assessments. These evaluations have suggested that the majority of children were ready for school, both academically and socio-emotionally.<sup>6</sup> The 2012-13 school year is the first year that a sizeable number of DPP students participated in Colorado's standardized testing system, the Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP). This allowed the evaluation team to conduct extensive data analysis to determine if these suggested gains translated into real longitudinal benefits, defined as increased scores on the TCAP. In 2013, the evaluation team analyzed data from all Denver Public Schools (DPS) students in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade who took the TCAP reading test. This analysis found that compared to non-DPP<sup>7</sup> students, DPP students were more likely, by 5.5 percent, to reach advanced or proficient levels, and less likely, by 6.1 percent to score at unsatisfactory levels. These results are illustrated in Figure 32 below.

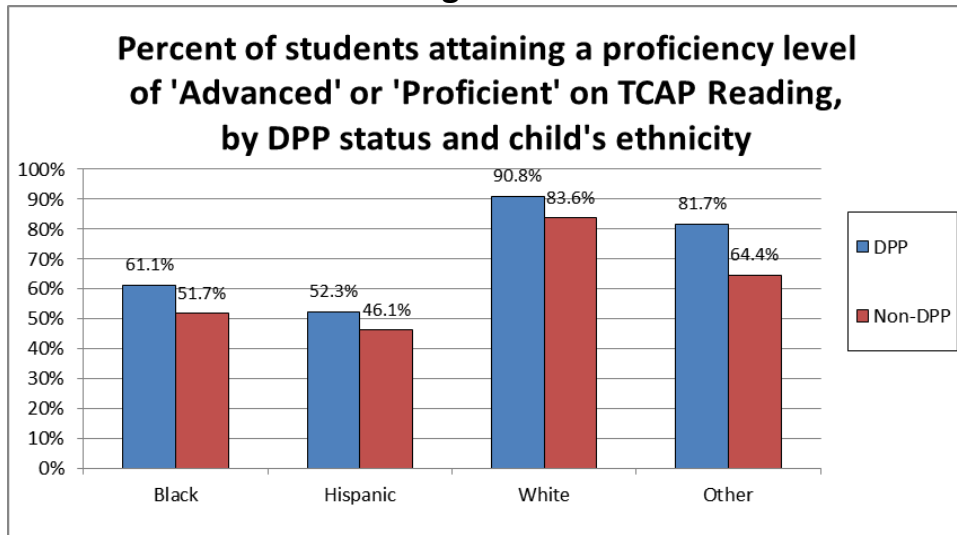
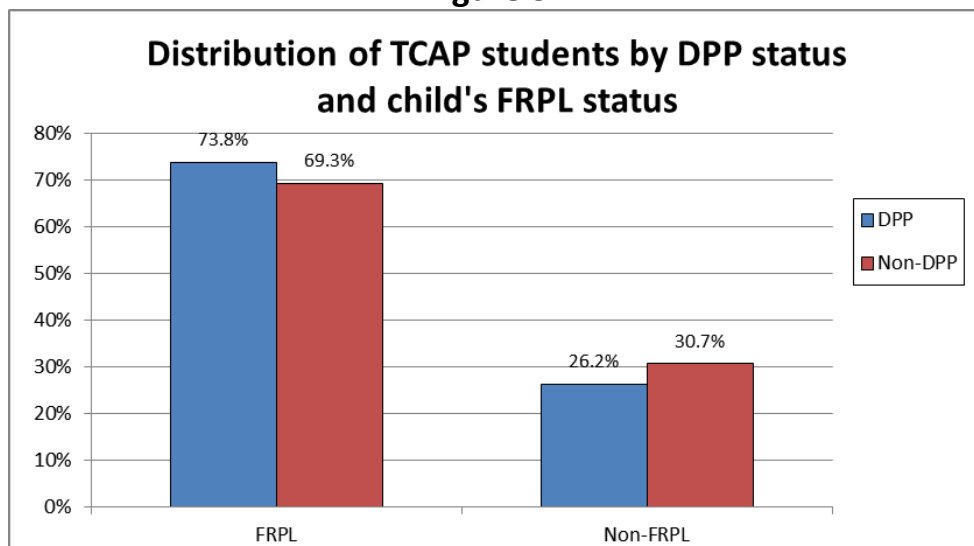
**Figure 32**



Analysis of results by student demographics was also completed which found that DPP students in every race/ethnicity category outperformed their non-DPP counterparts (Figure 33), as did students who qualified for free or reduced price lunch (FRPL) (Figure 34).

<sup>6</sup> For more information about this sample and results from the preschool year, readers are referred to the Annual Child Outcomes Report, available at: <http://www.dpp.org/results-and-research/main>.

<sup>7</sup> It should not be assumed that non-DPP students did not attend preschool; it only means that their families did not enroll in DPP. It is possible that a non-DPP student attended the same preschool as a DPP child, but did not enroll in DPP, and therefore, did not receive a DPP tuition credit.

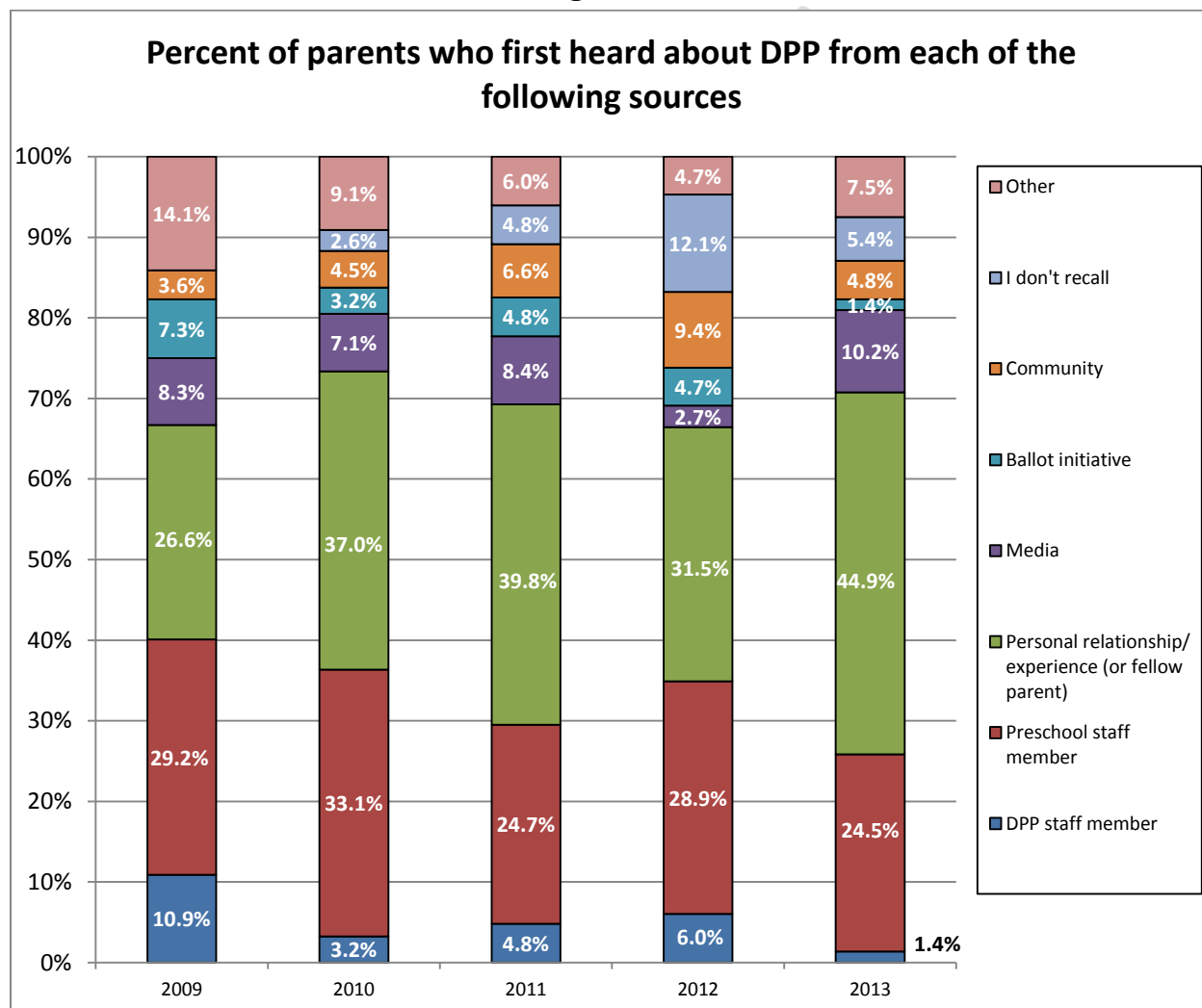
**Figure 33****Figure 34**

The full memo summarizing these findings can be found in Appendix H. The evaluation team will be analyzing math and writing scores later in 2013 and will continue to follow additional DPP cohorts as they go through third grade.

## Operations

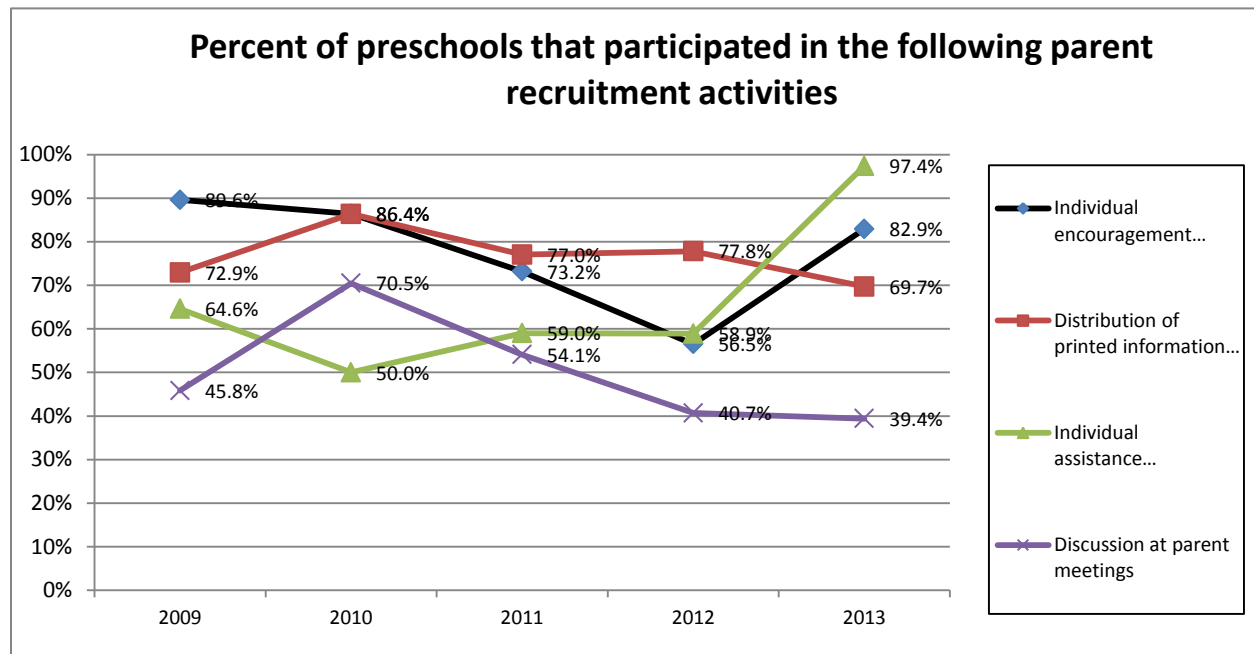
As DPP has developed over the years, the way parents find out information about the program has also changed. The survey responses for 2013 show that parents are increasingly hearing about DPP through personal relationships or experiences, while the number who first hear about the program from DPP staff or preschool staff has declined (Figure 35). This year, over 10 percent of parents also said they first heard about DPP through the media, an increase from under 3 percent in 2012.

**Figure 35**

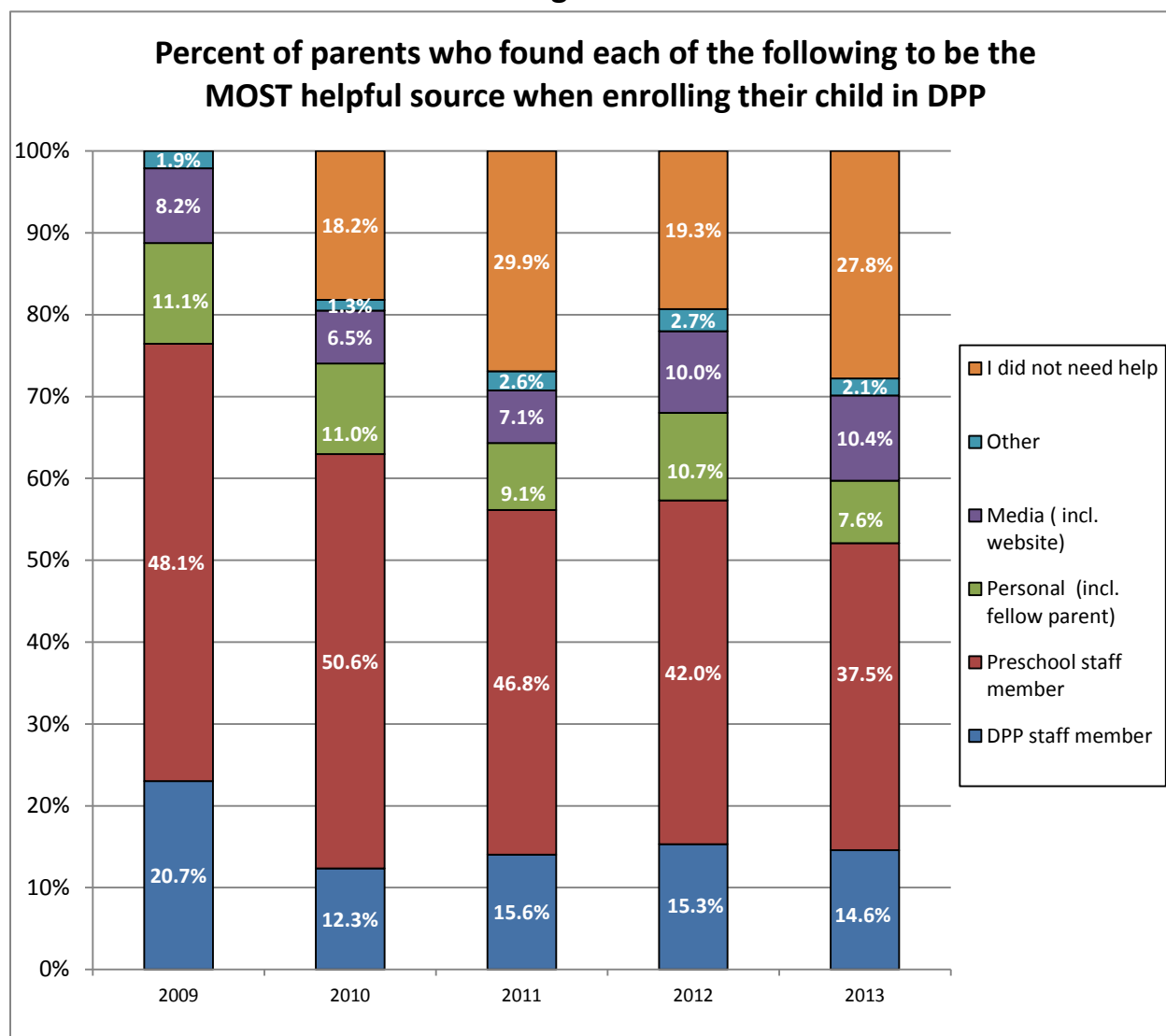


Although providers may not be the primary source of first information about DPP, they continue to provide a number of parent recruitment activities, as seen in Figure 36. Over 97 percent of preschools provide individual assistance to parents applying to DPP, an increase from 59 percent in 2012, and nearly 83 percent provide individual encouragement to parents to complete a DPP application.



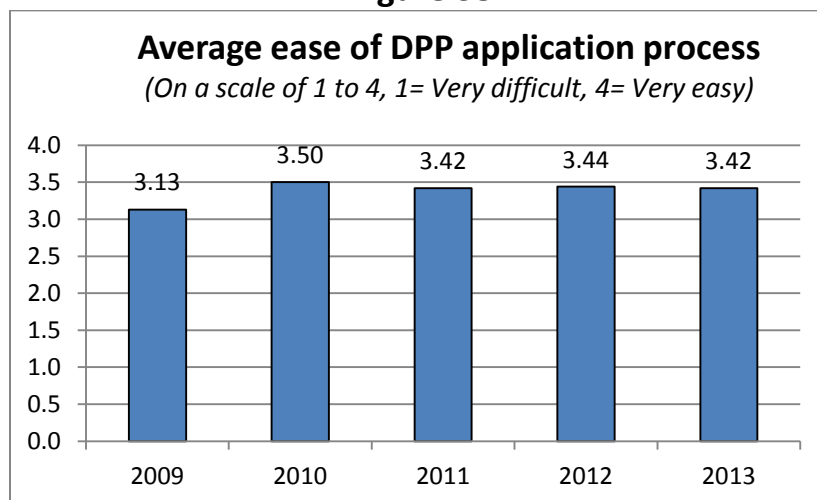
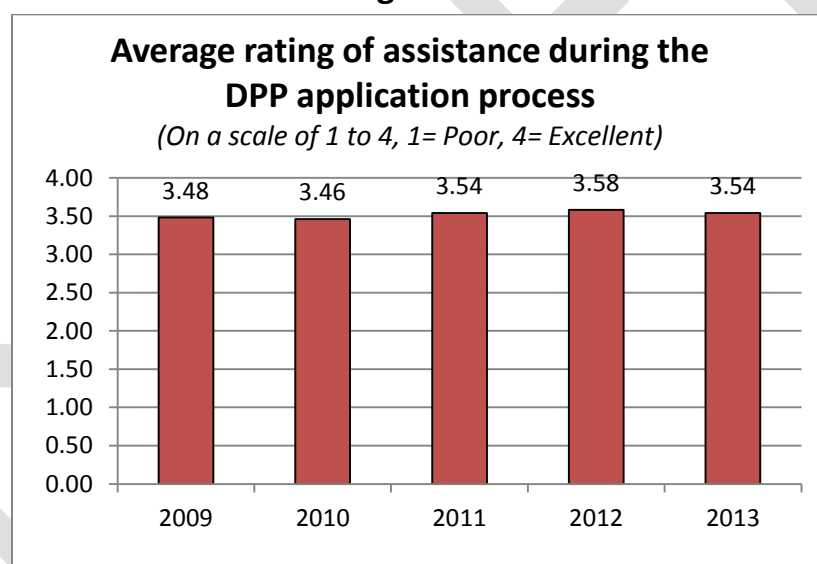
**Figure 36**

At the same time preschools report providing an increasing amount of assistance and information to parents, fewer parents are reporting that they are requesting help directly from DPP. Figure 37 shows nearly 28 percent of parents report they did not need help when enrolling their child in DPP, compared to fewer than 20 percent in 2012.

**Figure 37**

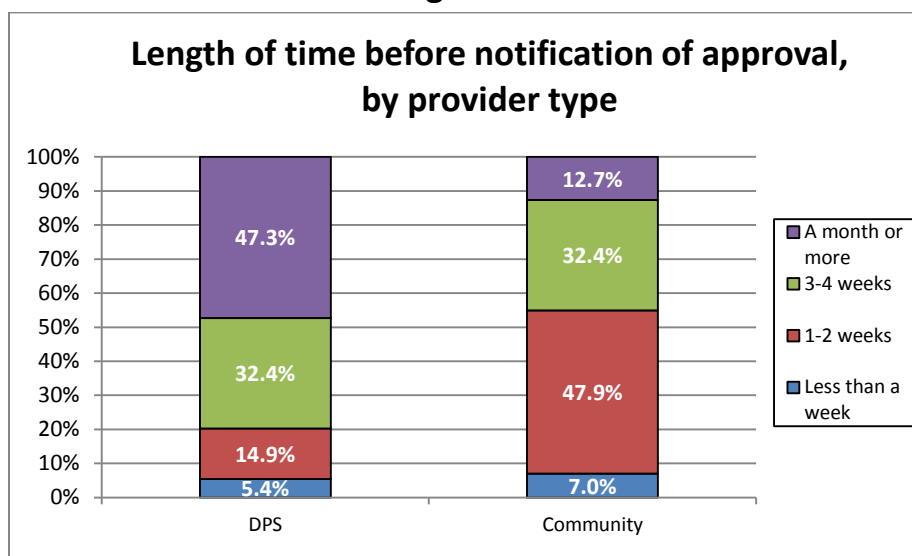
### Application Process

In addition to the increasing number of parents who report not needing help when enrolling, Figure 38 shows that parents continue to report that the application process is easy or very easy. Amongst those who did seek help in the process, the assistance offered by DPP was also rated very high, continuing a trend established over the course of the program (Figure 39).

**Figure 38****Figure 39**

In prior surveys, parents have criticized the length of time they have waited for notification of DPP approval. This year's data show a marked decline in the number of parents waiting a month or more for notification, with 47 percent of parents across DPS and community sites waiting more than a month, down from 55 percent of parents in 2012. Amongst community sites, in 2013, nearly 55 percent of parents waited less than two weeks for their notifications (Figure 40).

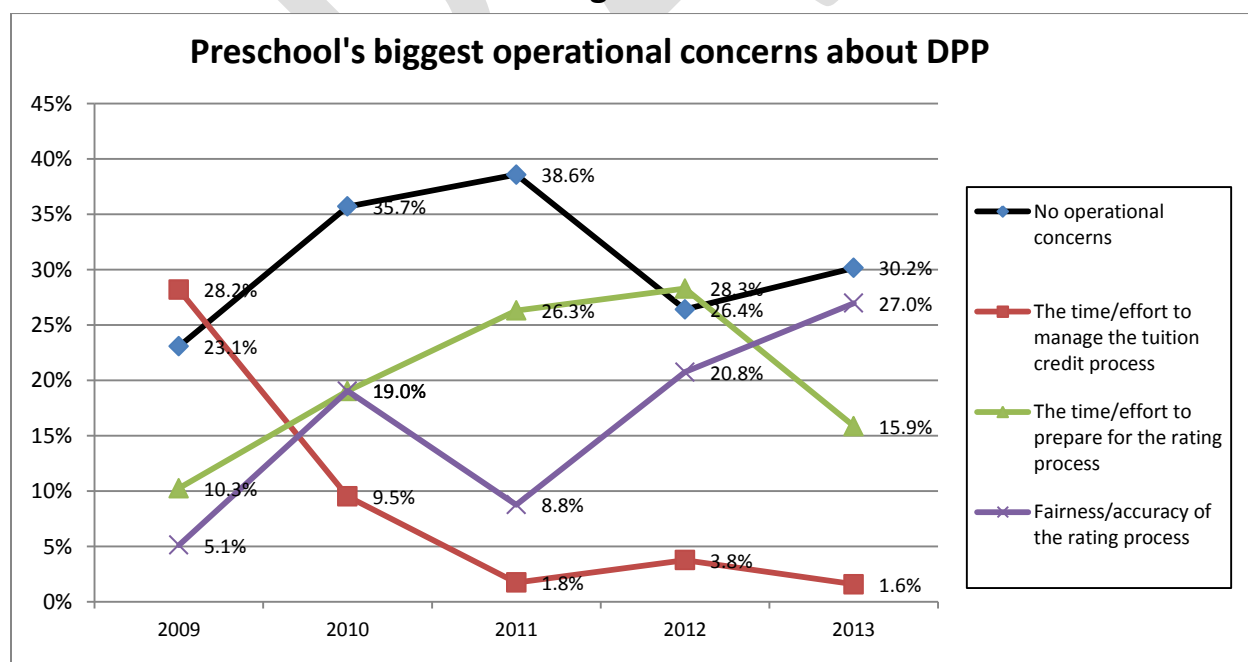
Figure 40



### Overall Operations

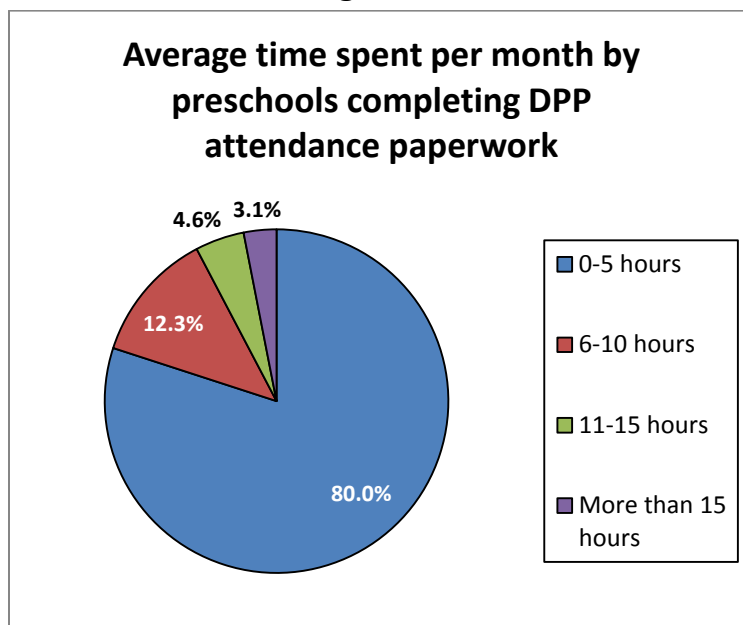
Overall, it is clear that providers are satisfied with operational aspects of DPP. Over 30 percent of providers stated that they have no operational concerns about DPP (Figure 41), and amongst those that did have a concern, the largest concern was around the fairness/accuracy of the rating process, which has been discussed above, which increased from 9 percent in 2011 to 27 percent in 2013.

Figure 41



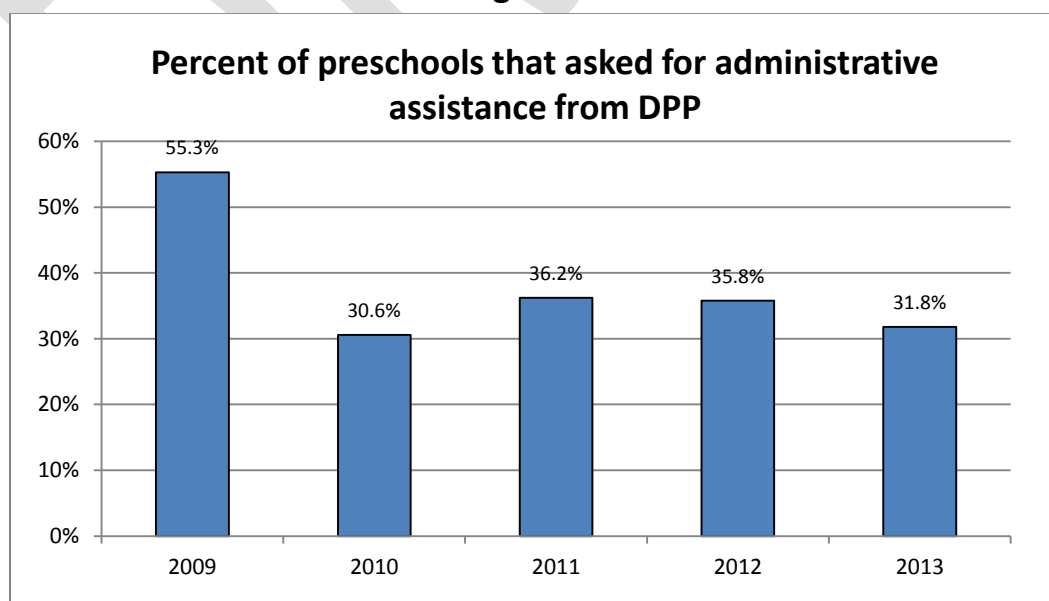
In addition, as shown in Figure 42, preschools report that they are spending less time completing DPP attendance paperwork, with 80 percent of providers spending 5 hours or less in 2013, compared to 65 percent who spent 5 hours or less in 2012.

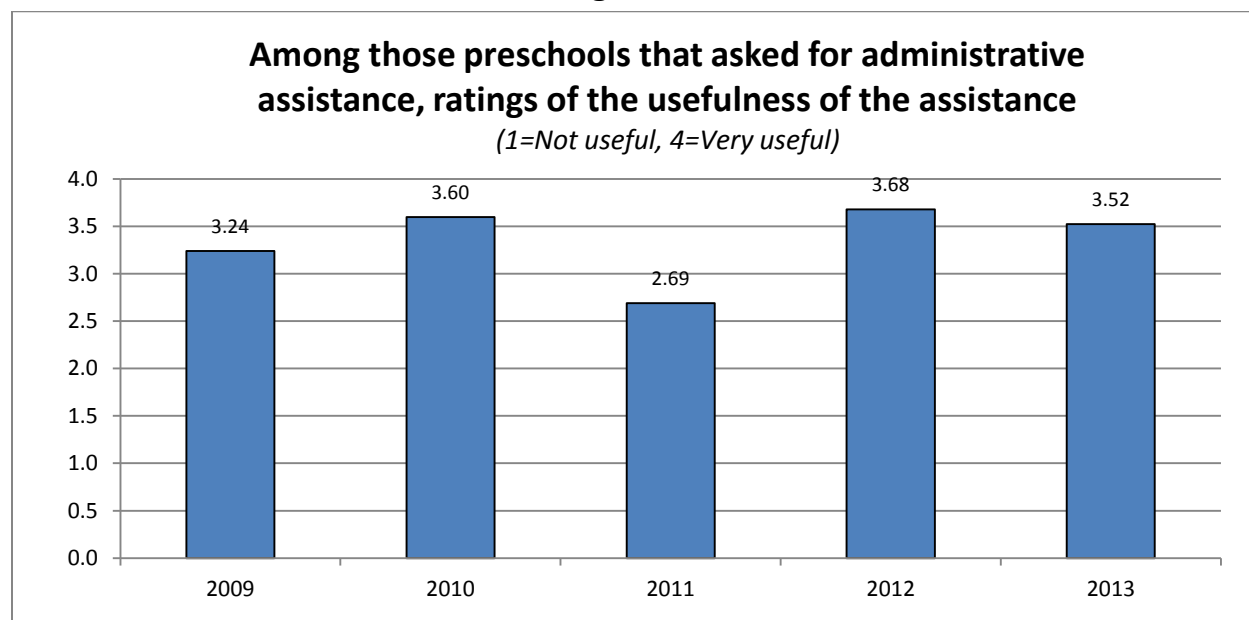
**Figure 42**



Finally, providers are less likely to seek administrative assistance from DPP than they have been in previous years (Figure 43), but those who did ask for assistance, rated that assistance very highly (Figure 44), continuing the gains seen in 2012.

**Figure 43**

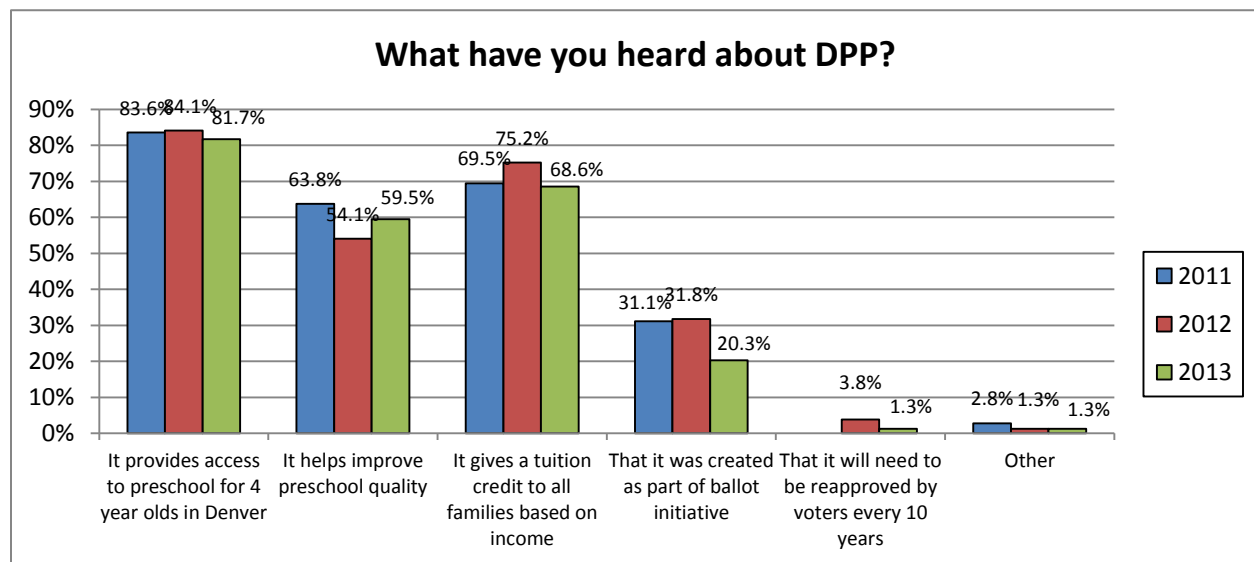


**Figure 44**

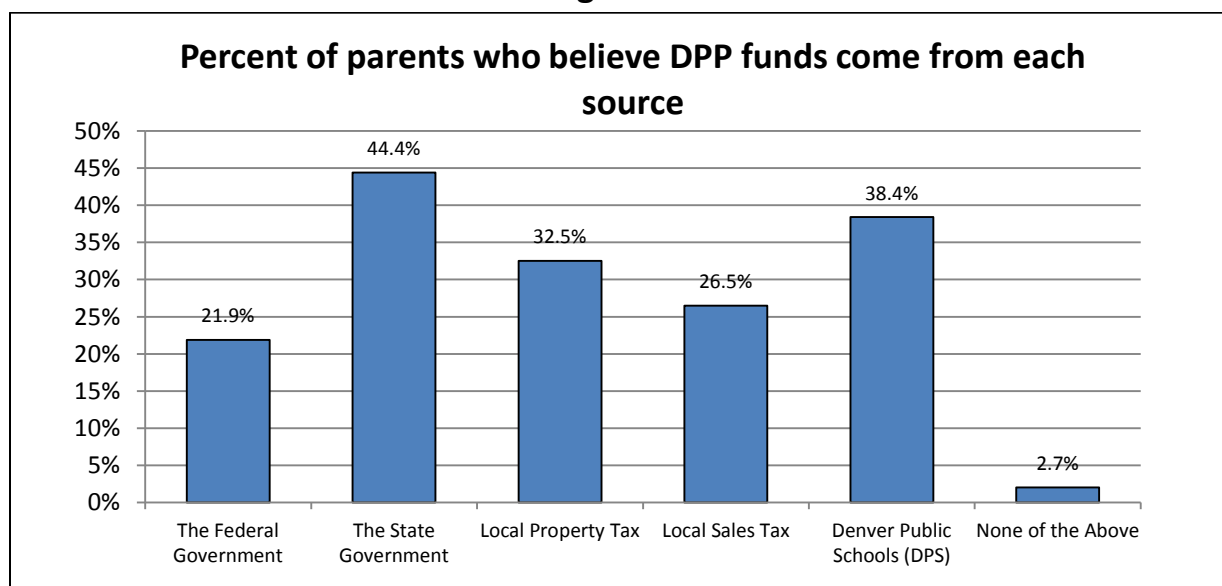
## Communications

The final key area we are highlighting in this report concerns communications. The data show that there is a lack of knowledge amongst parents about where the money comes from to fund DPP and few parents understand how DPP was created. Figure 45 illustrates that the number of parents who know DPP was created as part of a ballot initiative actually decreased from 32 percent in 2012 to 20 percent in 2013. Figure 46 shows that many parents still believe DPP funding comes from the state government, while only 26.5 percent of parents correctly identified the source of funding. Compared to prior years, there was a large increase this year in the number of parents who believe funding came directly from Denver Public Schools (DPS).

**Figure 45**

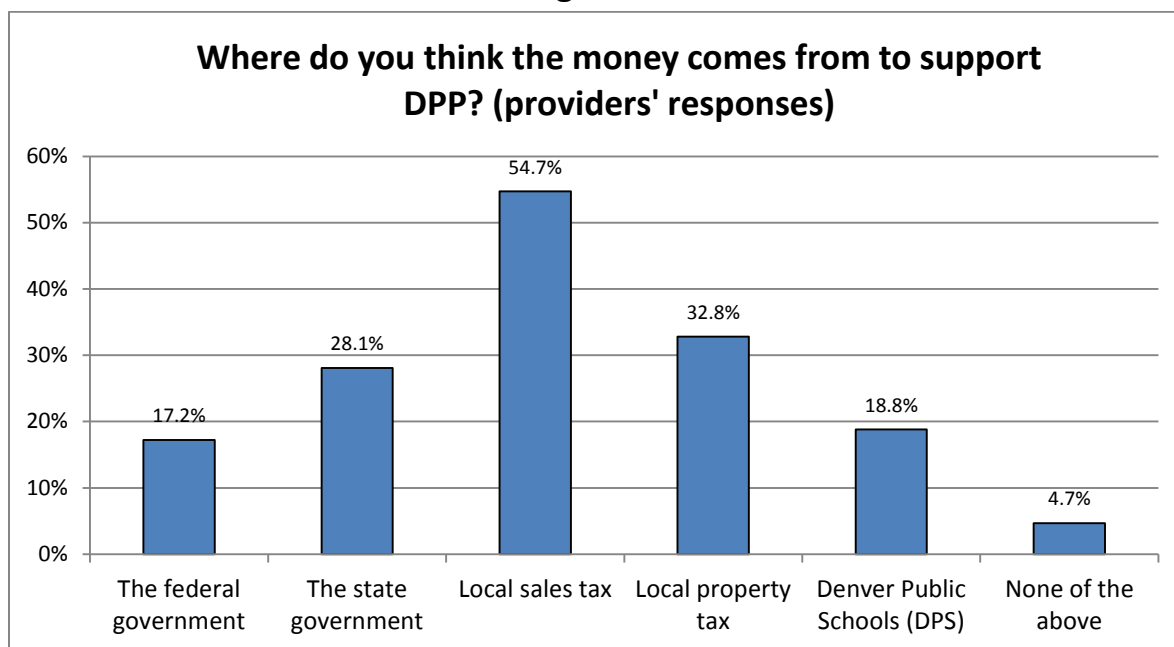


**Figure 46**



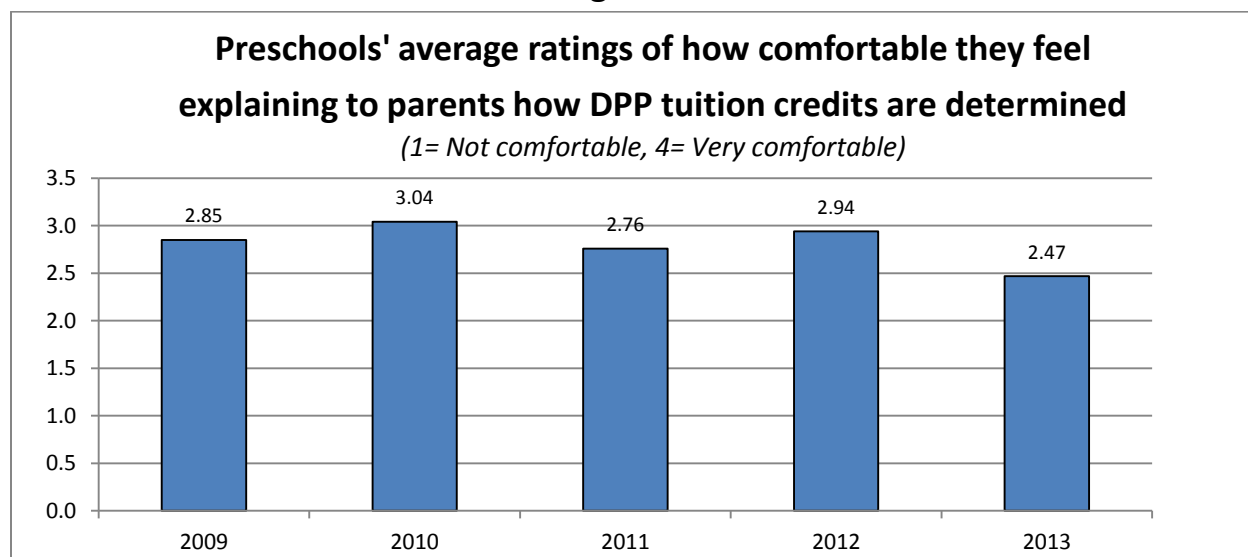
Amongst providers, nearly 55 percent correctly identified DPP's source of funding, a slight decrease on 2012 figures (Figure 47). Given data about how much parents rely on providers for information and assistance related to DPP, it is clear that DPP needs to work with providers to increase their understanding of the program to help influence parents' understanding.

**Figure 47**

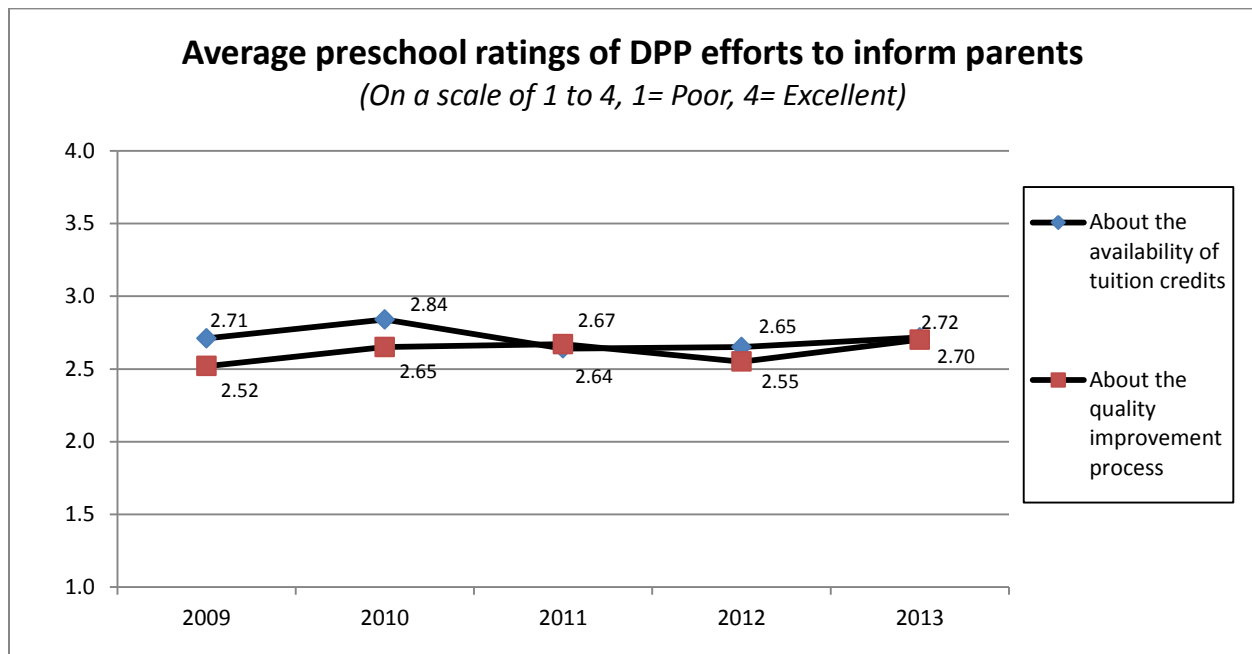


Providers report that they are less comfortable explaining to parents how tuition credits are determined than they have been at any time in the history of the program (Figure 48). Providers also rate DPP poorly for their efforts to inform parents about the availability of tuition credits and about the quality improvement process, a rating which has remained constant over time, as shown in Figure 49.

**Figure 48**





**Figure 49**

## V. Conclusion

The Denver Preschool Program (DPP) was created to encourage families to enroll their 4-year-old children in quality preschool programs so that the children enter kindergarten ready to learn and thus increase the likelihood that these children are successful in kindergarten and beyond.

Since the program began in 2007, DPP has become an important component of preschool education in the City and County of Denver. Through August 2013, the following milestones had been achieved:

- A total of 175 providers, operating at 252 sites, were serving as approved DPP providers.
- A total of 5,467 children in 2012-13 received approval for DPP tuition credits.
- Of the 252 sites, 69 had received a Qualistar rating of 4 stars, and 138 received a rating of 3 stars, the two highest ratings.
- The vast majority of DPP enrolled students were enrolled in top rated classrooms. Over 33 percent of children were enrolled in 4-star classrooms, while 56 percent attended 3-star classrooms.
- In 2013, a total of 160 classrooms at 83 sites completed the re-rating process, bringing the total number of classrooms re-rated since 2010 to 555.

In its sixth year of operation, DPP staff, board members, and operating partners continued the program in an effective manner. Further, DPP has been in the forefront of the local and statewide conversations about the quality of preschool and the importance of school readiness. All of this occurred in an economic environment that continues to be challenging.

Significant findings of this year's evaluation include the following:

- **DPP continues to provide high quality preschool to a majority of 4-year-olds in Denver.** Serving over 5,400 children, DPP enrolls around 70 percent of all Denver 4-year-olds.
- **DPP providers continue to embrace quality improvement efforts,** with over 80 percent of providers taking advantage of the DPP quality improvement process and resources and 90 percent of students enrolled in a highly-rated program. Providers report modifying hiring standards and curricula, and increasingly taking advantage of the coaching support offered by DPP.
- **Enrolling their children in preschool continues to provide Denver parents with the opportunity to attend school, to work, or to have some free time.** In addition, 90 percent of providers have reported increasing their hours due to DPP. While the impact of the tuition credit on overall

enrollment is decreasing, parents report that the tuition credit affects the number of hours their children are enrolled in preschool.

- **Analysis of third grade TCAP reading scores finds that DPP students outperform their non-DPP counterparts**, with DPP students being more likely, by 5.5 percent, to reach advanced or proficient levels, and less likely, by 6.1 percent, to score at unsatisfactory levels. Analysis of these results by student demographics found that DPP students in every race/ethnicity category outperformed their non-DPP counterparts, as did students who qualified for free or reduced price lunch (FRPL).
- **Providers are generally very happy with DPP operations, reporting very few concerns.** Concerns they did report centered around the rating system and process. Parents gave higher ratings to the ease and speed of the DPP application process this year and are reporting that they are increasingly able to complete the application without assistance from DPP or the provider.
- **There continues to be significant gaps in knowledge and understanding amongst parents and providers regarding the source of DPP funding.** The number of parents who know that DPP was part of a ballot initiative, and will therefore need re-authorizing, decreased from prior years. While knowledge amongst providers was better, that too decreased over last year. Providers are also less comfortable explaining the tuition credits to parents.

While this evaluation does find room for improvement, particularly in the areas of parent and provider knowledge about DPP funding, it also finds that DPP continues to realize its goals and manage its financial resources well. DPP has also continued its leadership role in both local and statewide discussions of child care and preschool quality. Finally, with the first significant DPP cohort taking their 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade TCAP exams this year, and scoring significantly higher on the reading test than their non-DPP counterparts, the perceived benefits of preschool discussed in prior years now have been confirmed.

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## Appendix A: DPP Evaluation Questions & Detailed Findings

### Detailed Findings – Response to Evaluation Questions

In the fall of 2007, DPP and the evaluation team developed a set of evaluation questions. These questions were refined this year to take into account changes in DPP operations and procedures. The current evaluation questions are listed in Table A1 below. The questions are designed to track the effectiveness of the theory of action for the DPP program and they guide the yearly evaluation of the program.

This year's evaluation of the annual parent survey includes an analysis of responses broken down by the following factors: child's ethnicity, home language, income level, provider type (DPS, center-based, or home-based sites), and preschool attendance status (half-, full-, or extended-day attendance). All of the providers' annual survey responses were also cross-tabulated by the following factors: Qualistar rating, total number of classrooms, number of DPP classrooms, city sector, 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 A1

DPP Evaluation Questions	
<b>A. Information and Knowledge about DPP: What do families know about DPP and how accurate is that knowledge?</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are parents informed about the existence of DPP and about how to apply for the tuition credits?</li> <li>2. Are parents aware of the goals of DPP? Are parents aware that DPP is distinct from DPS?</li> <li>3. Are parents aware of how DPP is funded?</li> <li>4. Does this knowledge vary by income level or language spoken at home?</li> </ol>	
<b>B. Ease of interaction with DPP: How do Parents and Providers describe their interactions with DPP, its partners, and providers? Concerning Tuition Credits? Concerning Quality improvement</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does the DPP application system make it easy for families and providers to participate?</li> <li>2. Does the system work effectively across family income levels and/or the language spoken by the parent?</li> </ol>	
<b>C. Tuition credits: Do tuition credits encourage parents from all income levels to send their four-year-old children to high quality preschools?</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does the availability of the preschool tuition credits encourage families to enroll in the program?</li> <li>2. Do families opt for higher quality programs because of the tuition credits?</li> <li>3. Is family behavior in these areas influenced by income level or the language spoken by the parent?</li> </ol>	
<b>D. Quality Improvement: Do quality improvement resources change the quality of participating preschool programs?</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Did the number of rated and/or accredited programs change as a result of the DPP QI program?</li> <li>2. Did the quality of participating programs increase as a result of DPP?</li> <li>3. Did changes in quality vary by provider type or star rating?</li> </ol>	
<b>E. Child Development: What is the impact of DPP on student development?</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Did children make progress in their development while in participating DPP preschool environments (i.e., language, literacy, mathematics, social-emotional development, etc.)?</li> <li>2. To what extent and in what areas are DPP students ready for Kindergarten?</li> <li>3. Do children from different income levels and with different primary languages make similar progress in their development while in DPP early childhood environments?</li> <li>4. Do children participating in DPP compare favorably to their demographic counterparts who did not participate in DPP on subsequent assessments administered by Denver Public Schools (DPS)? Is attendance at higher-quality preschool programs associated with greater kindergarten readiness?</li> </ol>	

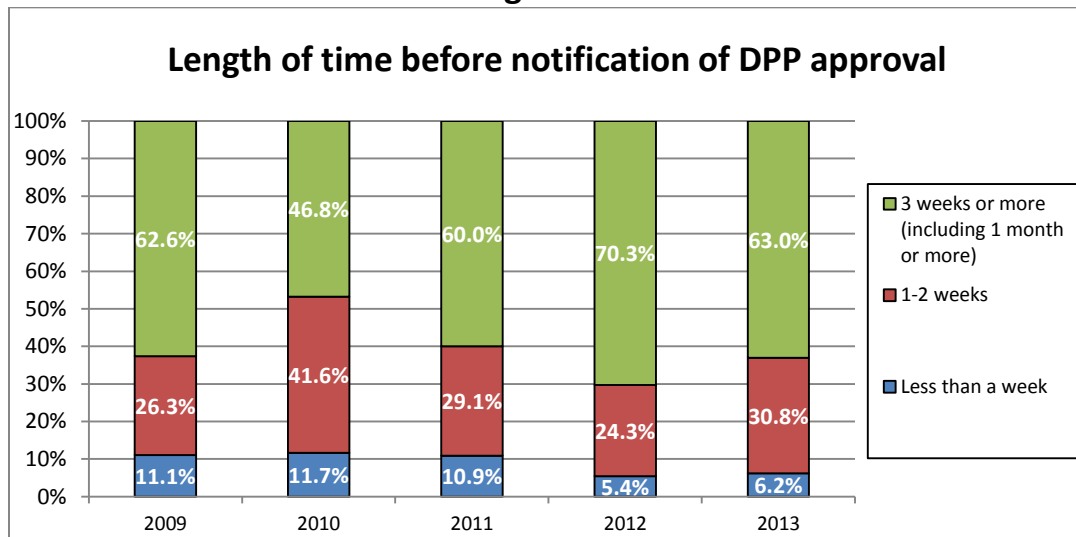
This section addresses all of the evaluation questions set forth in Table A1 above in the order that they appear in the Table with one exception. The Child Outcomes questions, E1 through 4, are addressed in a separate report prepared by the Clayton Early Learning Institute, and in a memo produced by APA addressing TCAP results for the 2008-09 cohort. This memo is included as Appendix H. 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, preschool attendance status, and Qualistar Rating). Results of these additional analyses are presented only if they are noteworthy and/or useful in answering the question being addressed.

## Information and Knowledge about DPP Outreach

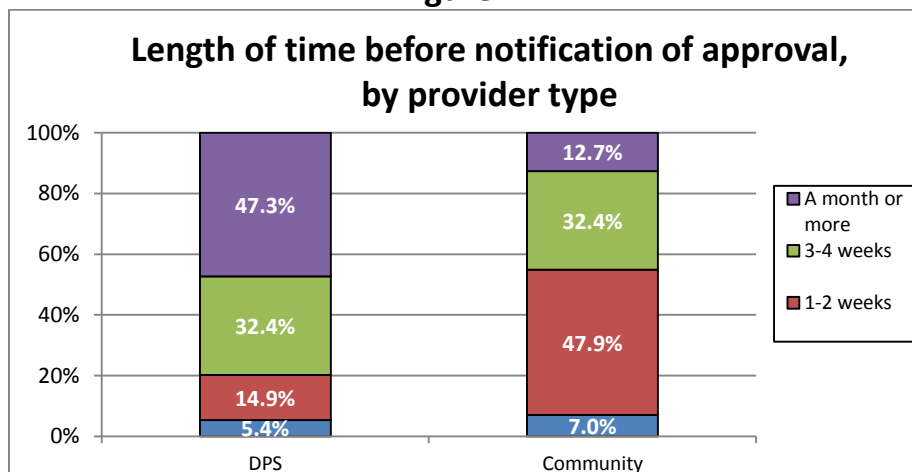
*What do families know about DPP and how accurate is that knowledge? Does this knowledge vary by income level or language spoken at home?*

In 2011 and 2012, parents reported that DPP has not communicated information about tuition credits in a timely manner, especially in DPS schools, with over 70 percent of parents reporting waiting three weeks or more for notification of approval in 2012. In 2013, notification times were greatly reduced, with 63 percent of parents waiting three weeks or more. Notification times continue to be longer for DPS parents, with 47 percent waiting a month or more, compared to only 12.7 percent of parents with children in a community site. DPS parents apply to DPP as part of their DPS application, and some of this extended delay could be a result of this additional process. Overall notification times have reduced in 2013, indicating that DPP is addressing this issue. Figure A1 shows how soon parents were notified about DPP approval in 2013 and Figure A2 shows this data disaggregated for DPS and community sites.

**Figure A1**

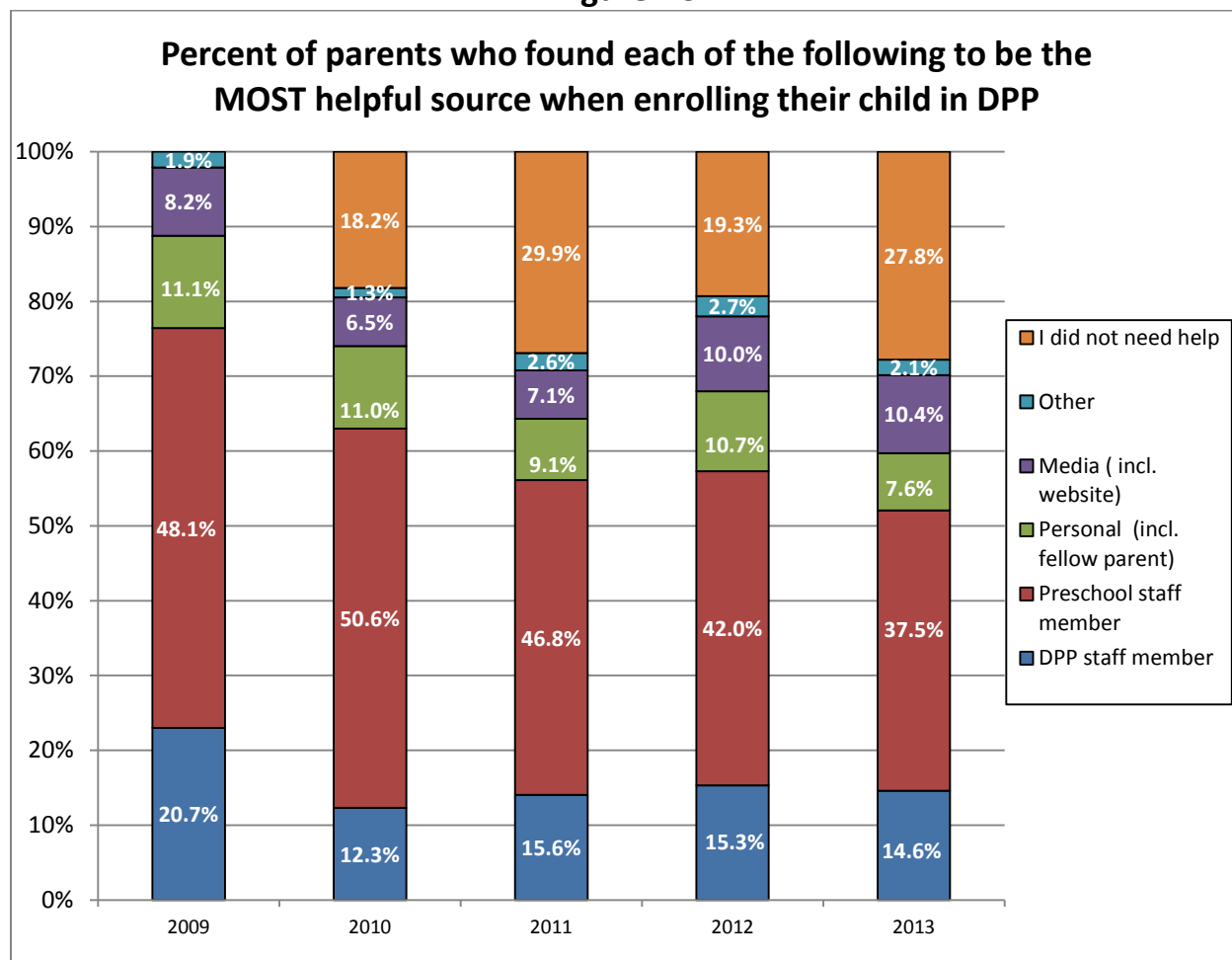


**Figure A2**



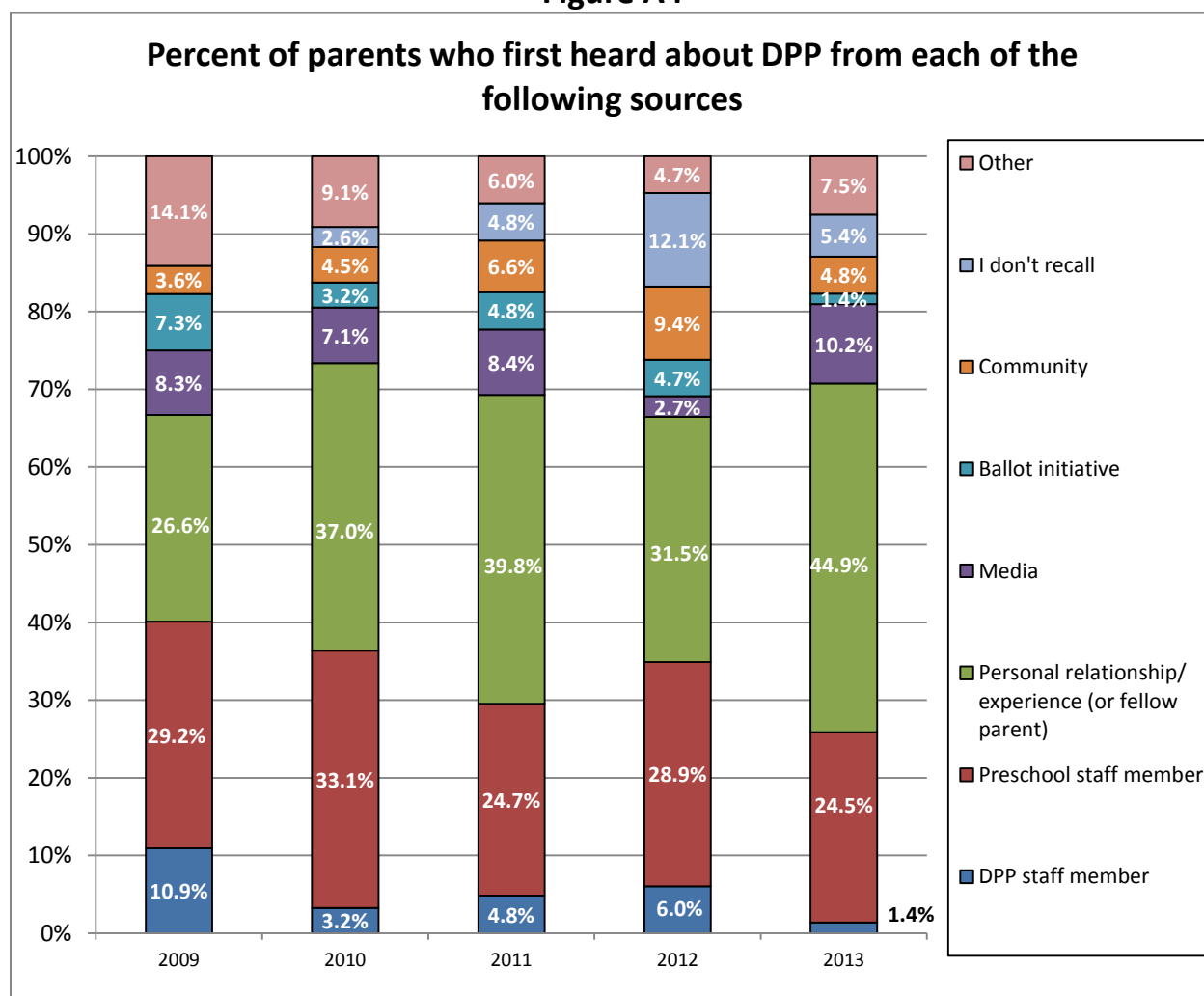
An increasing number of parents report not needing any help from DPP when enrolling their child. Those that did seek assistance received the most useful information from preschool providers, and in 2013 an increasing number found useful information through media, including the website.

**Figure A3**

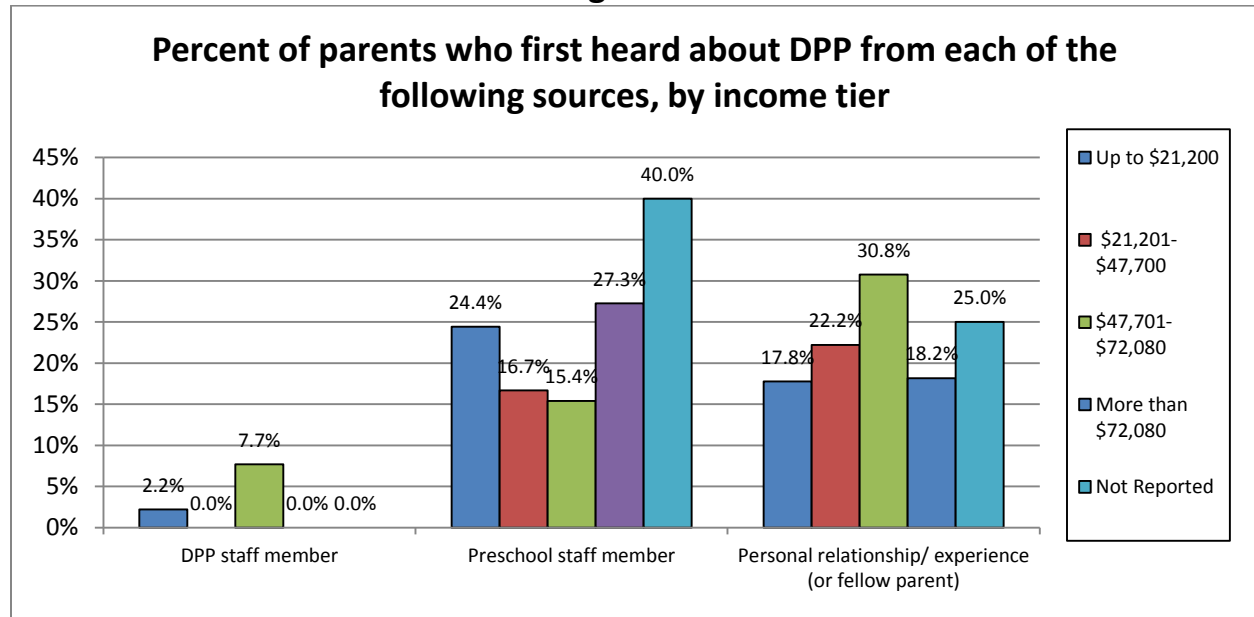
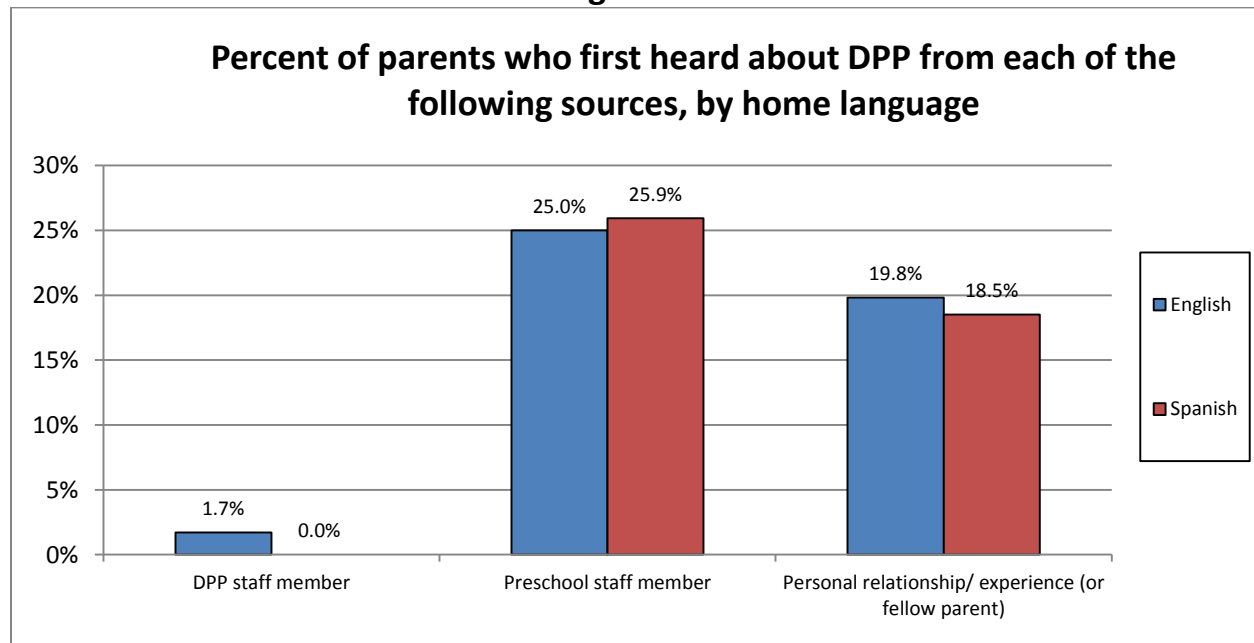


Personal relationship/experience was cited as the primary source of first information about DPP by nearly 45 percent of all respondents in 2013, an increase from 31.5 percent in 2012. Parents are relying less on preschool staff members or DPP staff as their first source, and relying instead on personal relationships, or increasingly on the media, which saw an increase from 2.7 percent to 10.2 percent. Figure A4 shows this data in comparison with prior years.



**Figure A4**

In 2012, there was a large disparity between income tiers about how parents first heard about DPP, with over 52 percent of parents in the lowest income tier relying on personal relationship or experience as their source of information, compared to just over 22 percent of those in the higher income tiers. However, in 2013, this disparity all but disappeared, with only 18 percent of income Tier 1 parents relying on personal relationships or experience compared to between 18 and 30 percent for the higher income tiers (see Figure A5). Similarly, differences by language spoken also decreased. In 2012, over 55 percent of Spanish speaking parents were most likely to get information from personal relationships or experiences, compared to just fewer than 25 percent of English speaking parents. However, in 2013, there was no statistical difference between the two groups, with 18.5 percent of Spanish speakers and 19.8 percent of English speakers relying on personal relationships or experience (see Figure A6).

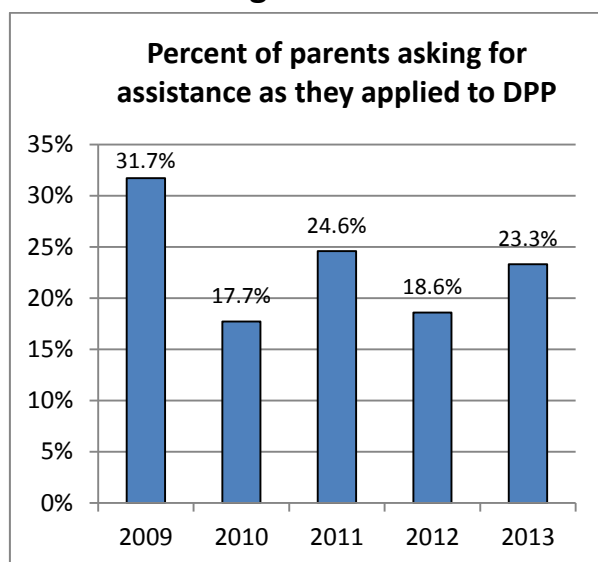
**Figure A5****Figure A6**

## Ease of Interaction with DPP

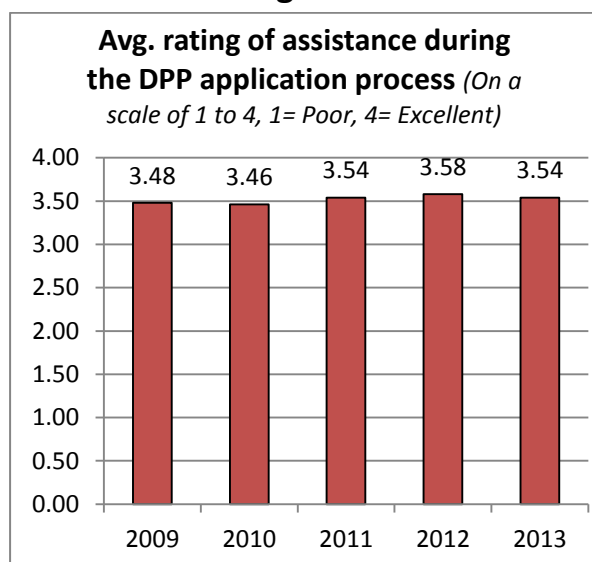
*How do parents and providers describe their interactions with DPP, its partners, and providers? Concerning tuition credits? Concerning quality improvement?*

The number of parents seeking assistance during the DPP application process in 2013 increased since last year, to just over 23 percent. Those parents who did seek assistance rated that assistance very highly, continuing a trend seen over the course of the program. See Figures A7 and A8 for comparisons across years.

**Figure A7**

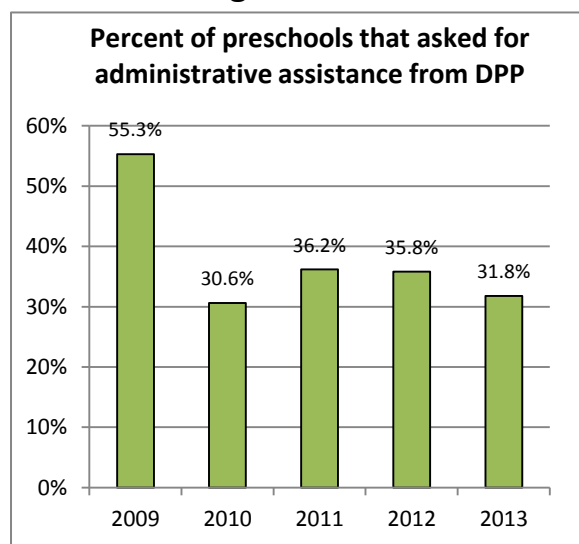


**Figure A8**

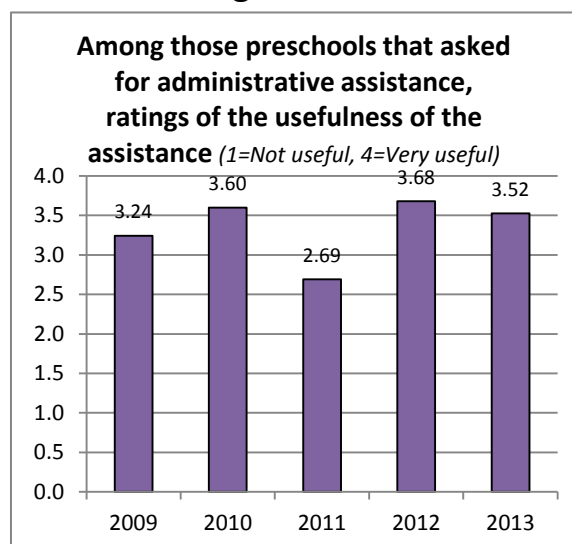


Amongst providers, the number of preschools requesting administrative assistance from DPP also dropped to just under 32 percent (Figure A9); providers who received assistance rated it highly in terms of usefulness (Figure A10), generally maintaining the gains seen in 2012.

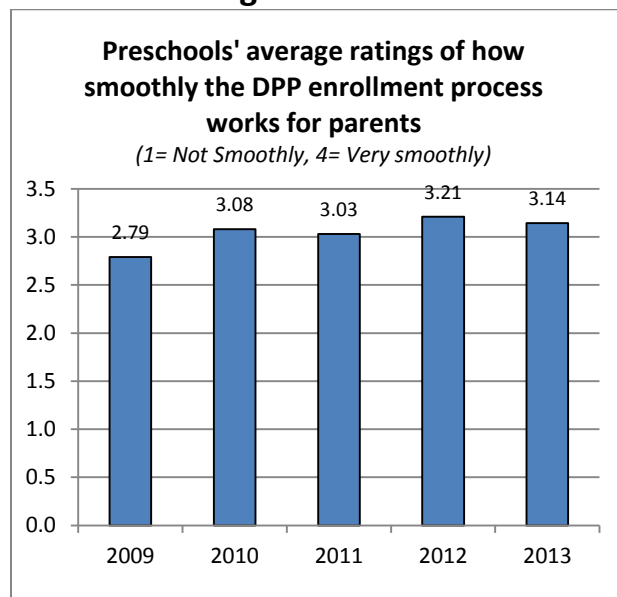
**Figure A9**



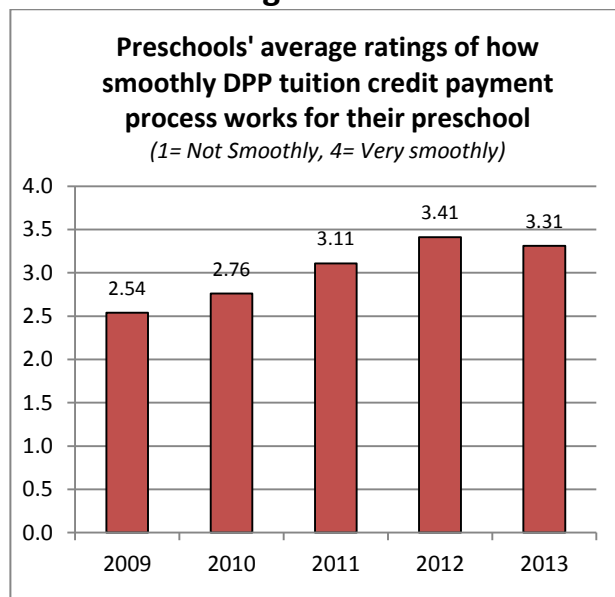
**Figure A10**



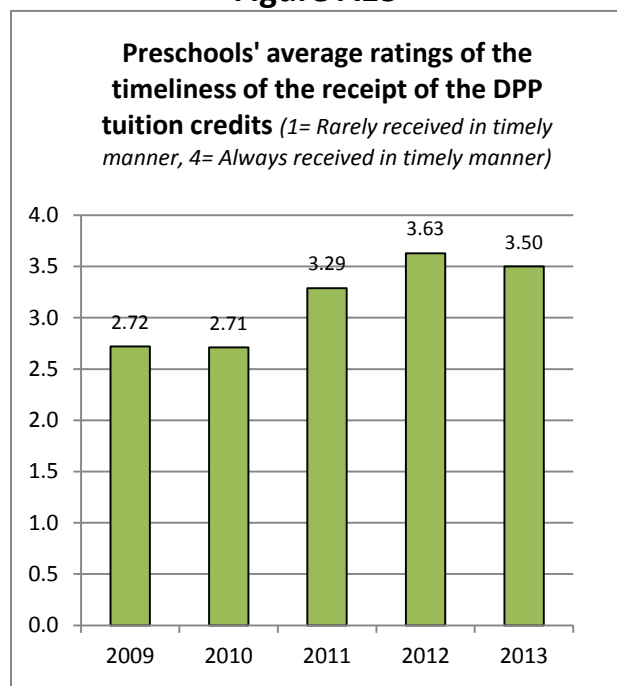
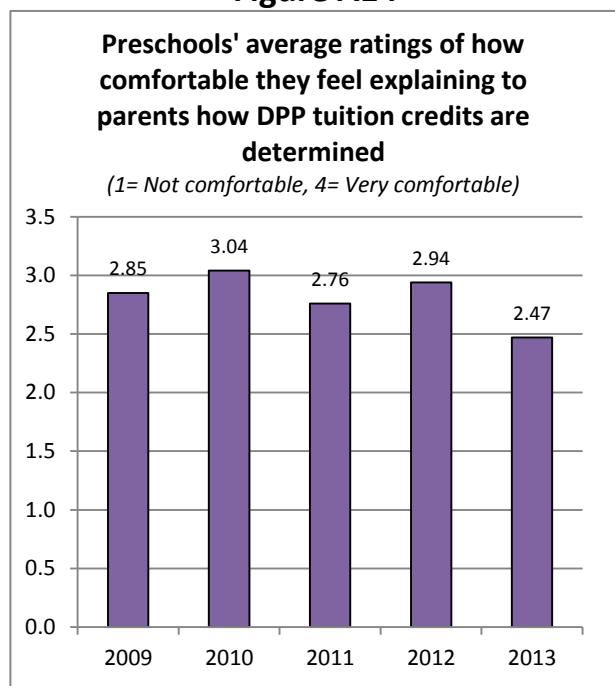
Provider ratings related to the ease of the enrollment process maintained its high rating in 2013, while ratings related to the tuition credit payment process and the timeliness of the receipt of tuition credits both saw decreases after gains made in 2012. Provider ratings of how comfortable they feel explaining how tuition credits are determined saw a large decrease in 2013, to its lowest point in the history of the program, reflecting a need for attention.

**Figure A11**

We did not ask this question to DPS sites after 2010

**Figure A12**

We did not ask this question to DPS sites after 2010

**Figure A13****Figure A14**

## Tuition Credits

*Do tuition credits encourage parents from all income levels to send their 4-year-old children to high-quality preschools? Does the tuition credit structure encourage preschool providers in Denver to increase the number and quality of preschool slots available?*

The tuition credit was shown to have influenced both the decision to enroll children in preschool, and the number of hours of preschool attendance. Figure A15 shows that 36.4 percent of parents would not have enrolled their child in preschool if the DPP tuition credit was not available, the largest percentage indicating this since the program began.

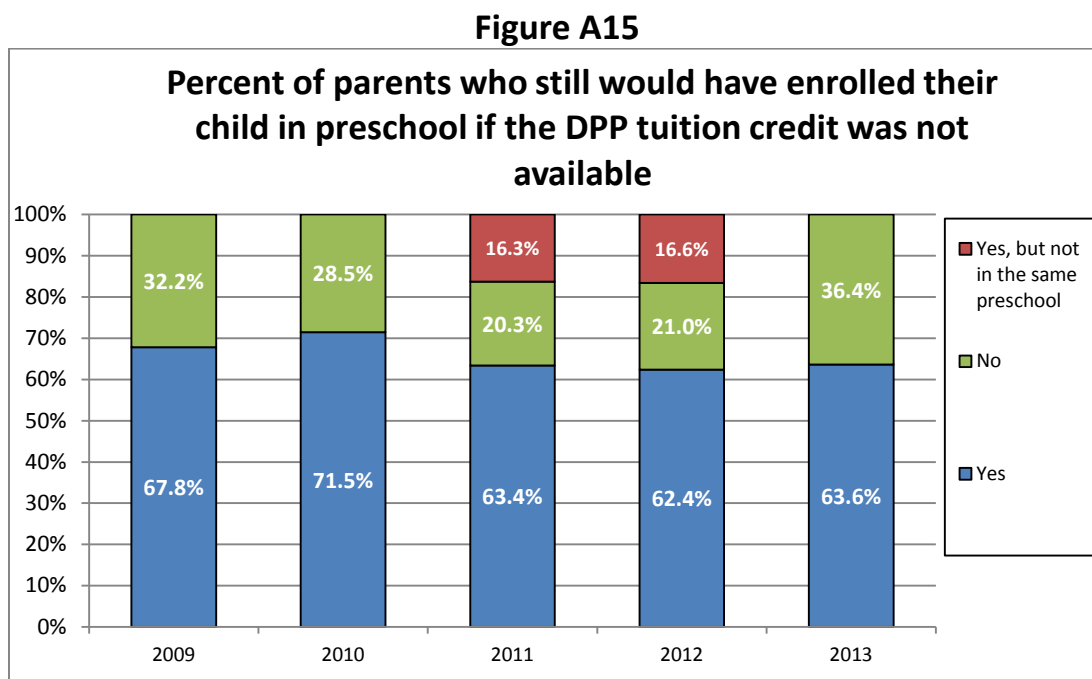
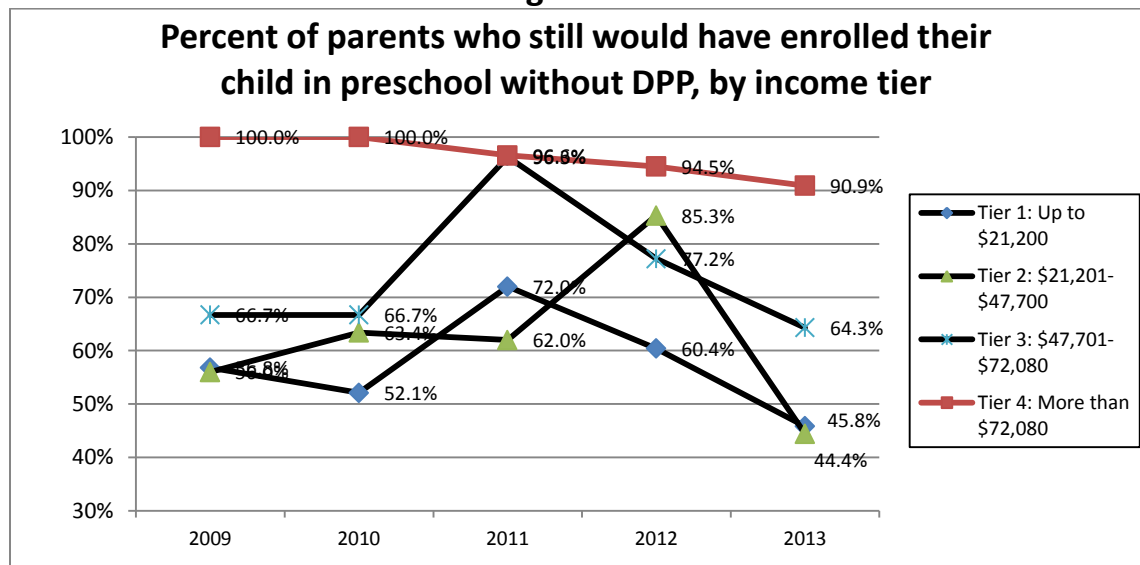
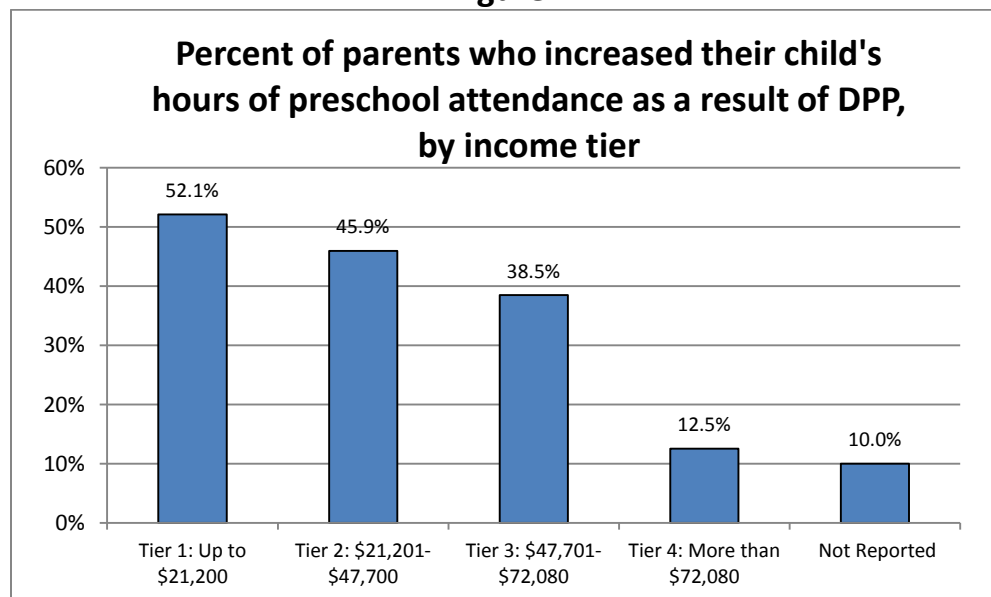
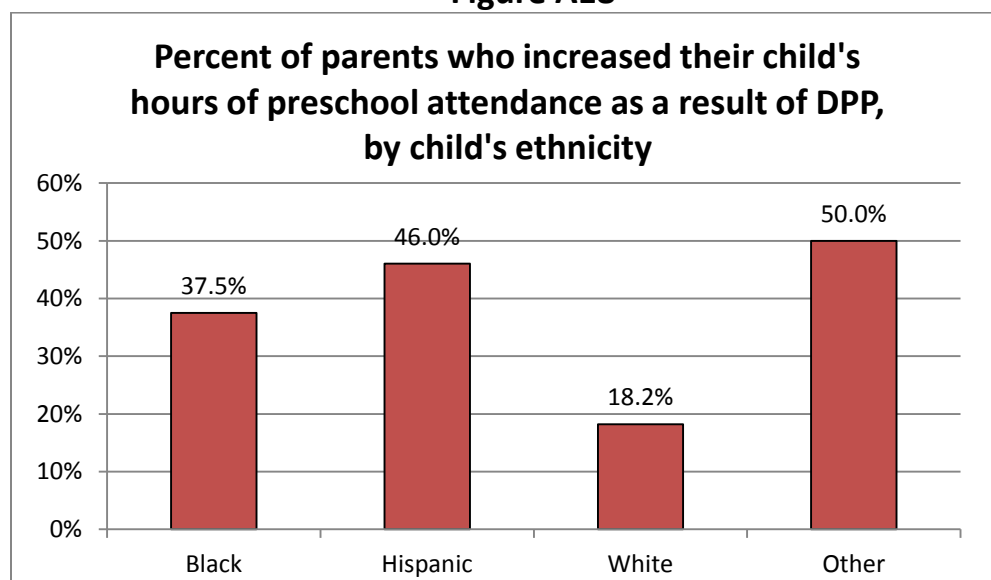


Figure A16 illustrates how the influence of the tuition credit on enrollment was most visible in lower income households. Only 46 percent of parents in the Tier 1 income category reported that they would have enrolled their child in preschool without the tuition credit, compared to 91 percent of parents in the Tier 4 income category.

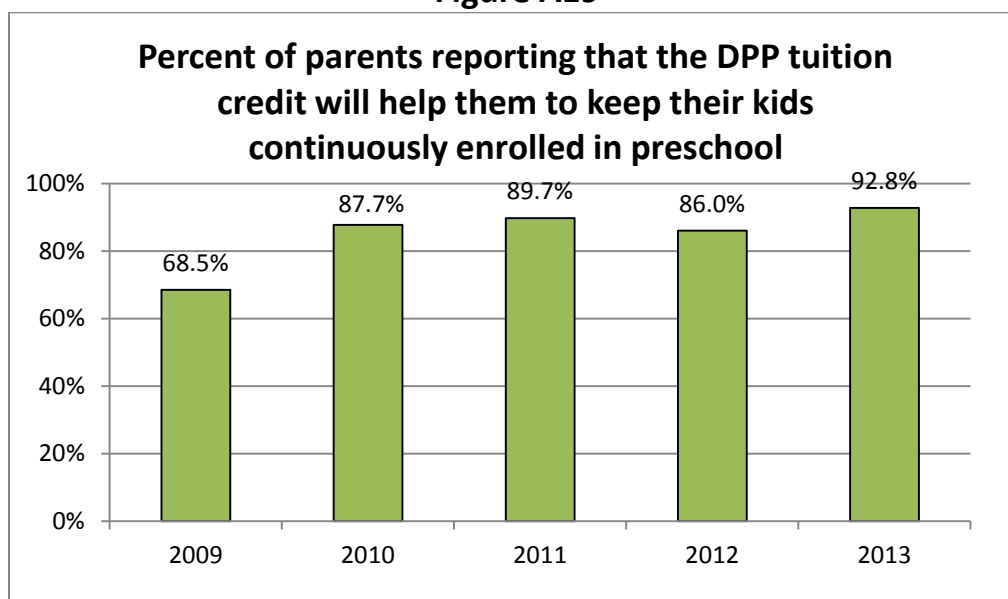
**Figure A16**

The tuition credit also influences the number of hours children are enrolled in preschool, especially for low income and black or Hispanic families. Over 52 percent of parents in income Tier 1 and 46 percent in income Tier 2 said that they increased the number of hours their child attends preschool as a result of the tuition credit, compared to just 12.5 percent in income Tier 4 (Figure A17). In addition, 37.5 percent of black families and 46 percent of Hispanic families reported that the tuition credit allowed them to increase the number of hours their child was enrolled in preschool, which compares to only 18 percent of white families who reported the same effect (Figure A18).

**Figure A17**

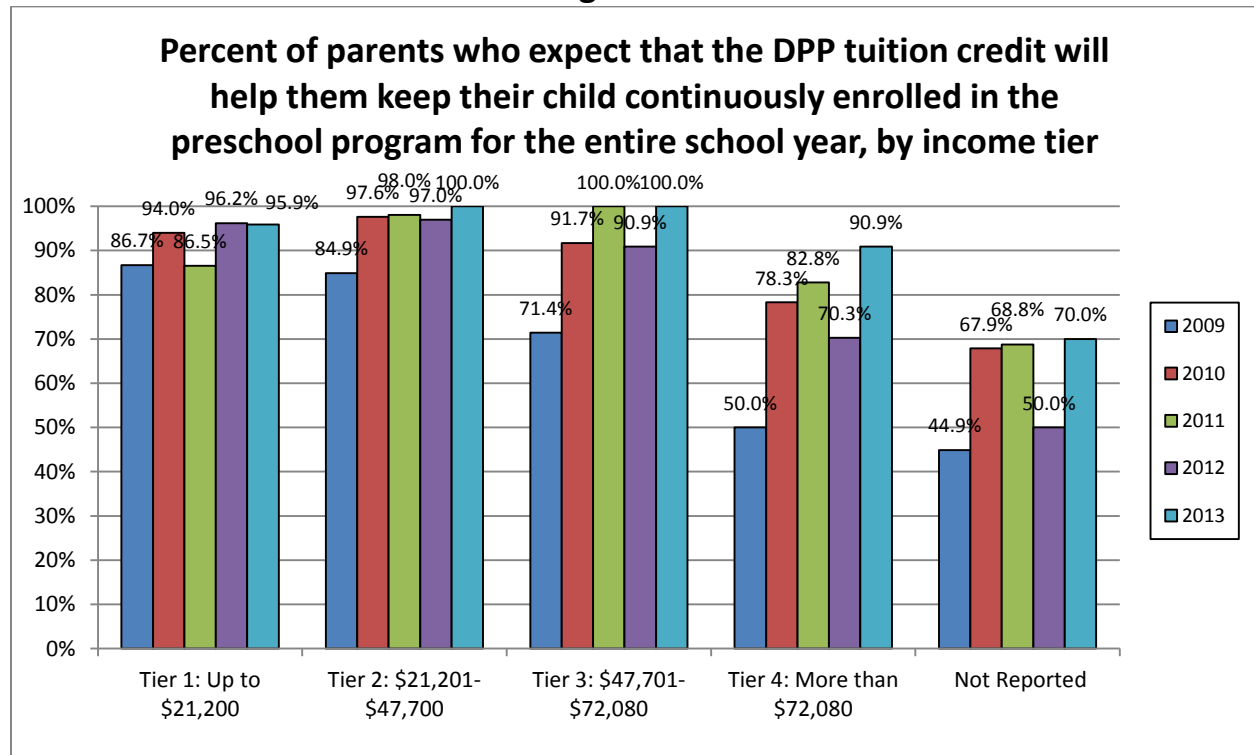
**Figure A18**

The tuition credit was also shown to have a major impact on continuous enrollment. Over 92 percent of parents reported that the DPP tuition credit helps them keep their child continuously enrolled in preschool (Figure A19).

**Figure A19**

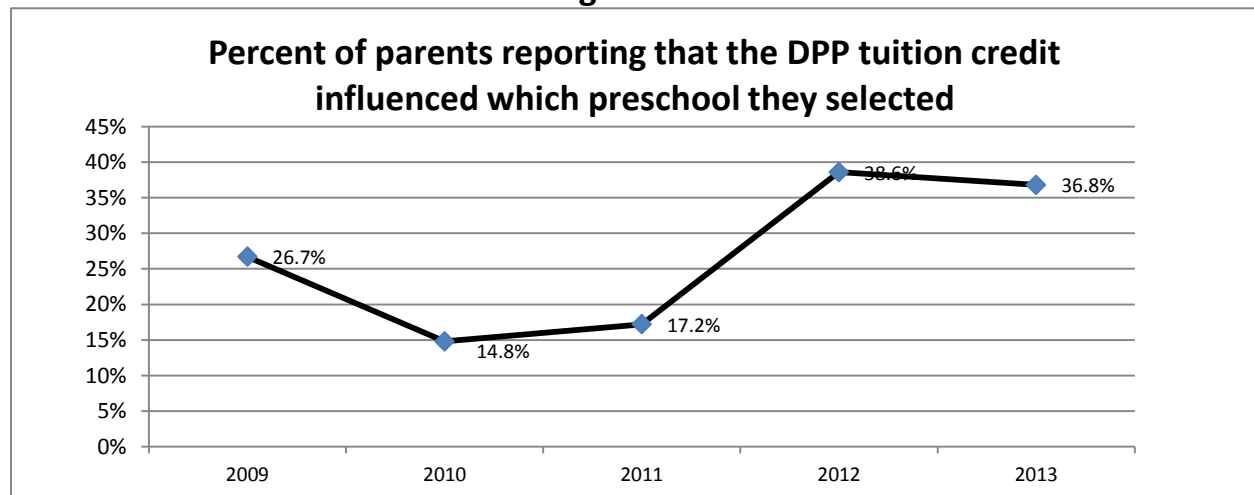
When this data is broken down by income tier, as seen in Figure A20, the variation between income tiers has reduced compared to prior years. In 2013, 96 percent of Tier 1 parents and 100 percent of Tier 2 and Tier 3 parents expect the tuition credit will help them keep their child continuously enrolled in the preschool program for the entire school year. In Tier 4, over 90 percent of parents report the same, up from 70 percent in 2012.

Figure A20



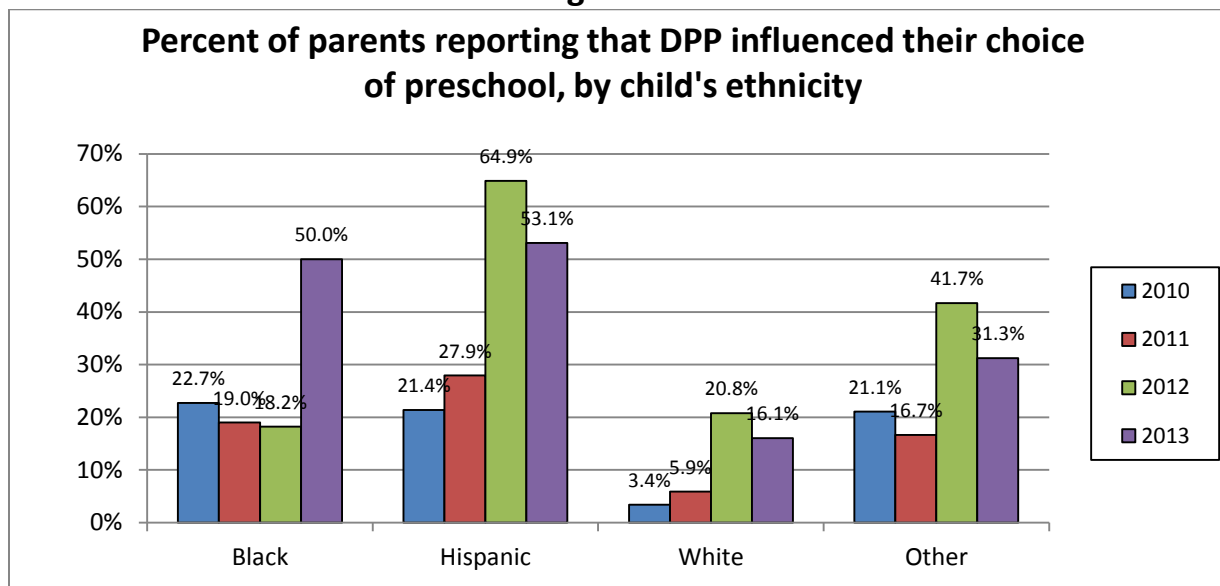
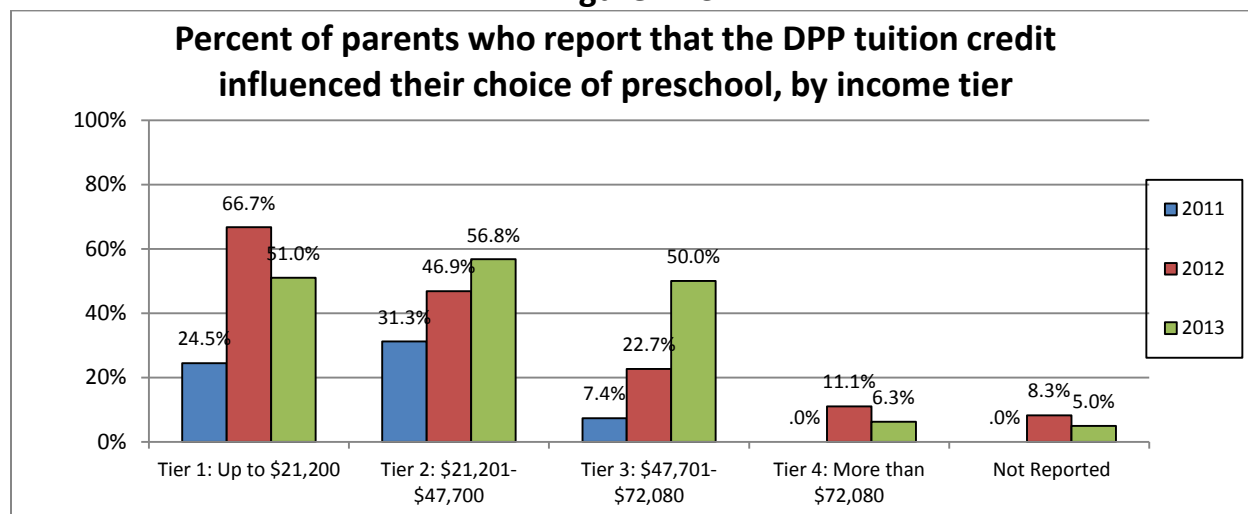
The tuition credit also has an impact on choice of preschool. Nearly 37 percent of parents reported that the tuition credit influenced their choice of preschool, maintaining the increase seen in 2012.

Figure A21

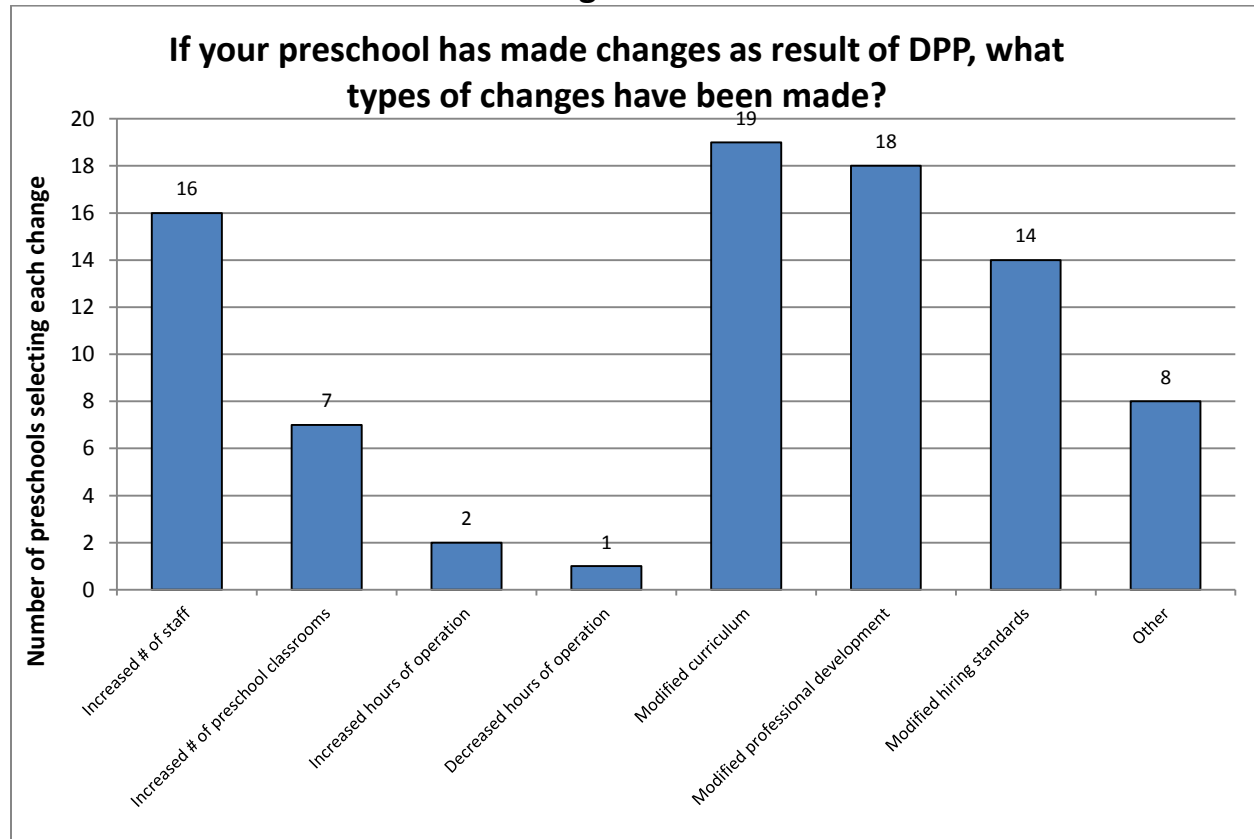




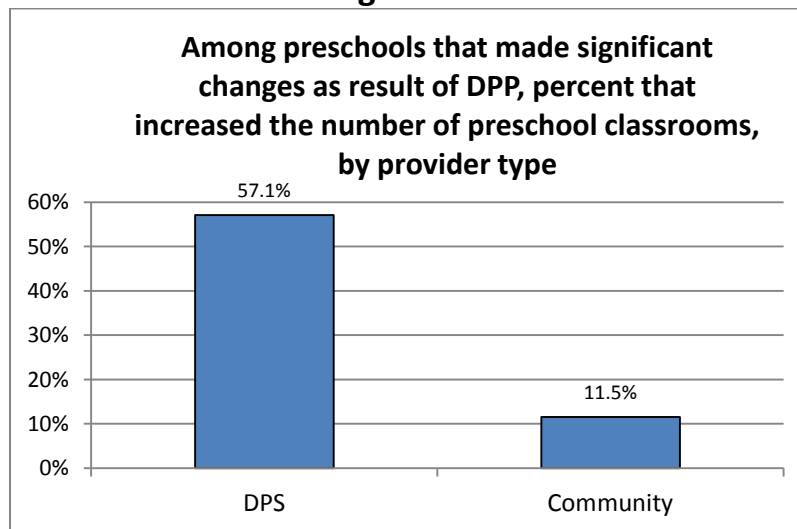
The impact of the credit on school choice is seen to vary widely by income level and ethnicity. As shown in Figure A22, 50 percent of black parents and 53 percent of Hispanic parents reported that the credit influenced their preschool choice, compared to 16 percent of white parents. Figure A23 shows that around 50 percent of parents in the Tier 1, 2, and 3 income categories reported that the credit influenced their preschool choice, compared to no parents in the Tier 4 income category.

**Figure A22****Figure A23**

Preschools reported making a number of changes as a result of DPP. As shown in Figure A24, similar to previous years, the most common changes in 2013 related to modifying professional development, changing school curriculum, and increasing the number of staff and preschool classrooms.

**Figure A24**

Finally, the number of preschools increasing the number of classrooms in their preschool as a result of DPP was particularly evident amongst DPS preschools, with 57 percent of DPS sites increasing their total number of classrooms as a result of the DPP, compared to 11.5 percent of community sites, as shown in Figure A25.

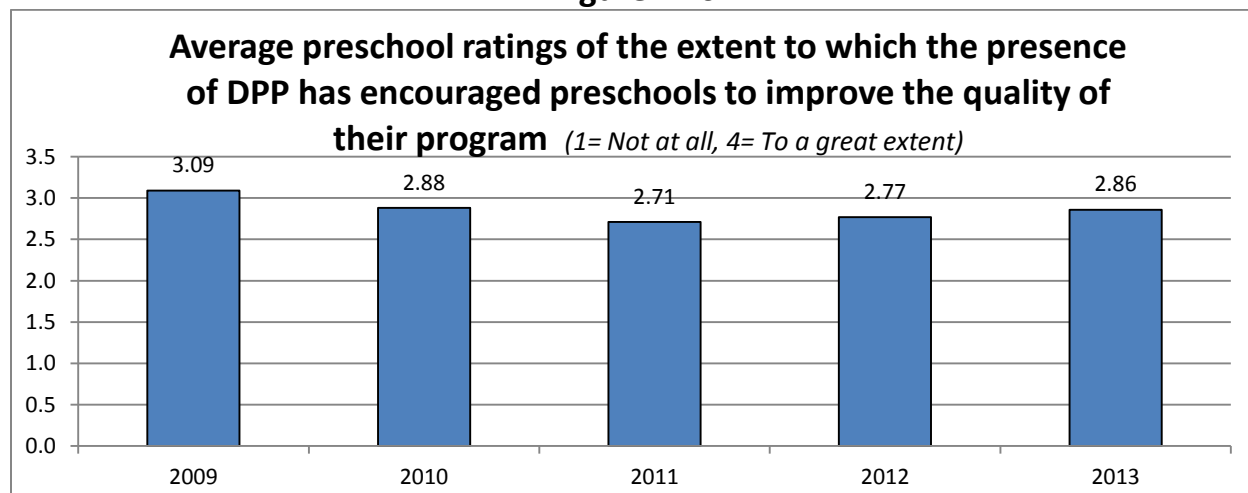
**Figure A25**

### Quality Improvement: Do quality improvement resources change the quality of participating preschool programs?

*Did the number of rated and/or accredited programs change as a result of the DPP QI program? Did the quality of participating programs increase as a result of DPP? Did changes in quality vary by provider type or star rating?*

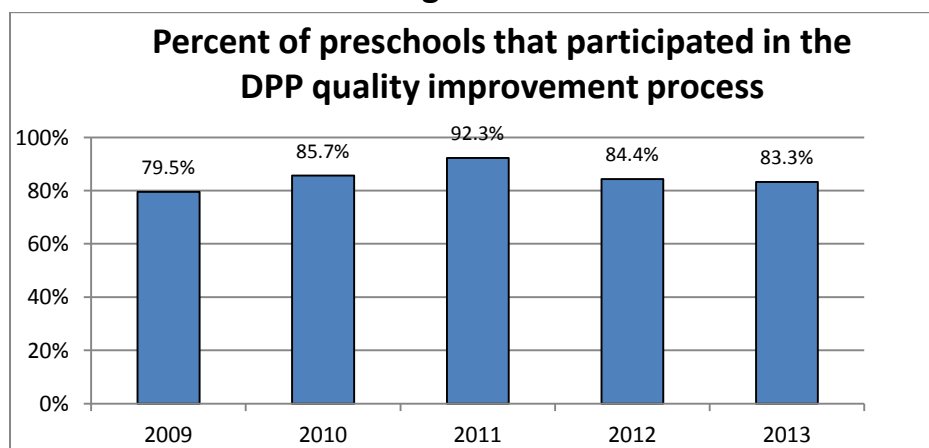
Providers continue to report that the presence of DPP has encouraged them to improve the quality of their program, as shown in Figure A26.

**Figure A26**



One of the key mechanisms DPP uses to help improve preschool quality in Denver is through its quality improvement process (QI), which provides resources to providers to increase quality. As shown in Figure A27, provider participation in the QI process remained high in 2013, with over 80 percent of providers reporting that they took advantage of the DPP QI process and resources. Participating in QI can take a variety of forms, including receiving financial assistance for materials and equipment, funding for quality ratings, coaching support and professional development.

**Figure A27**



Figures A28 and A29 show that providers find coaching support and financial assistance for materials and supplies to be the most helpful aspects of the QI process, with coaching support being rated significantly more helpful in 2013, compared to 2012.

Figure A28

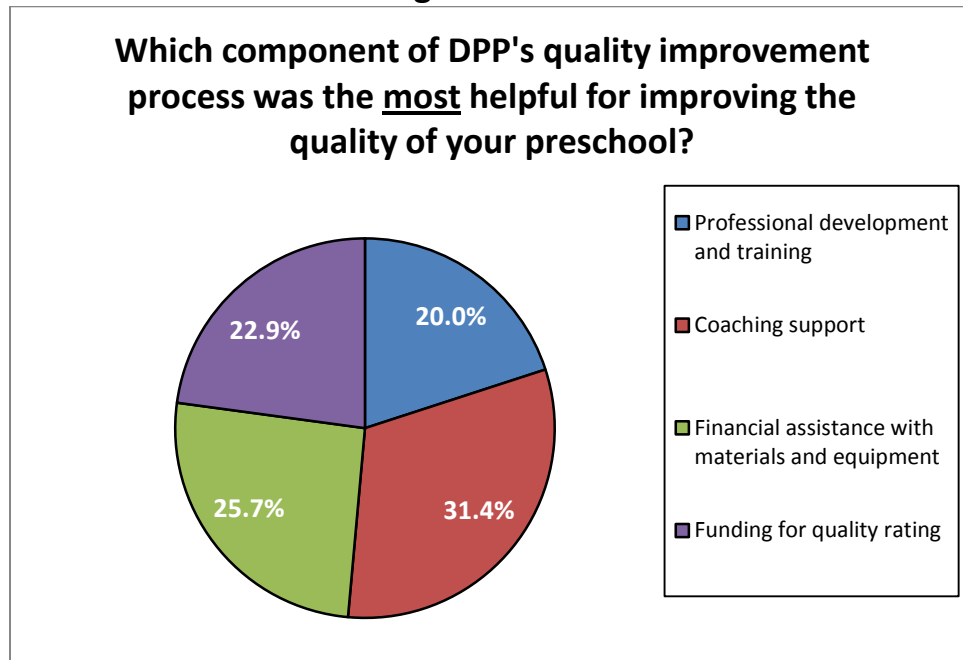
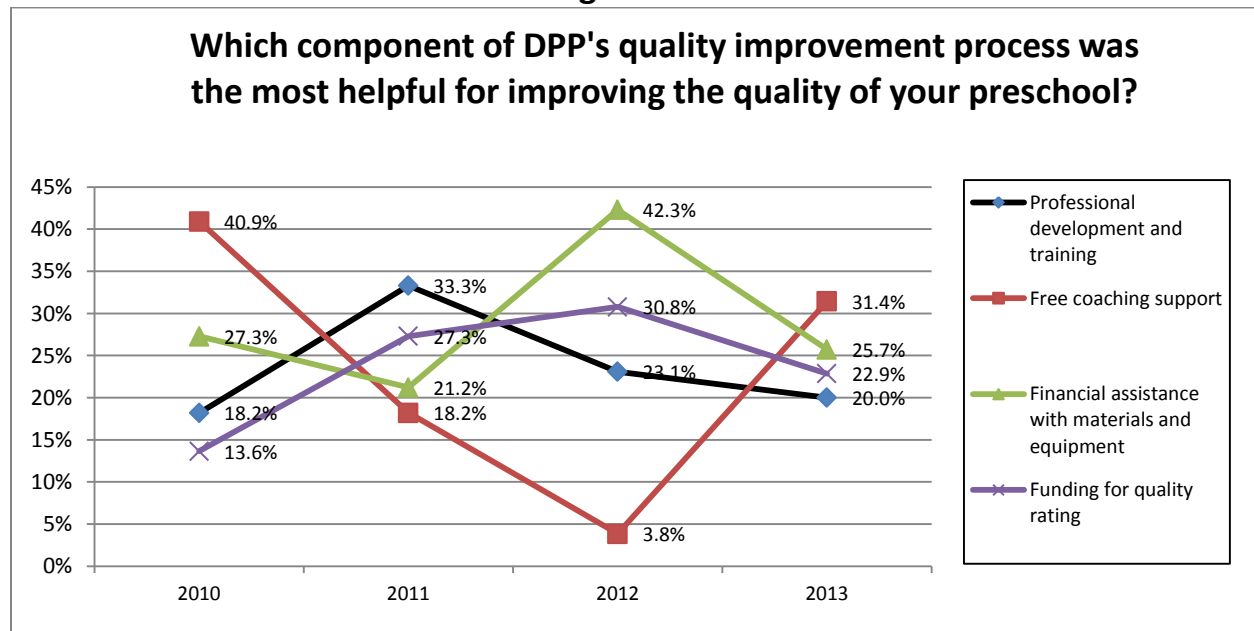
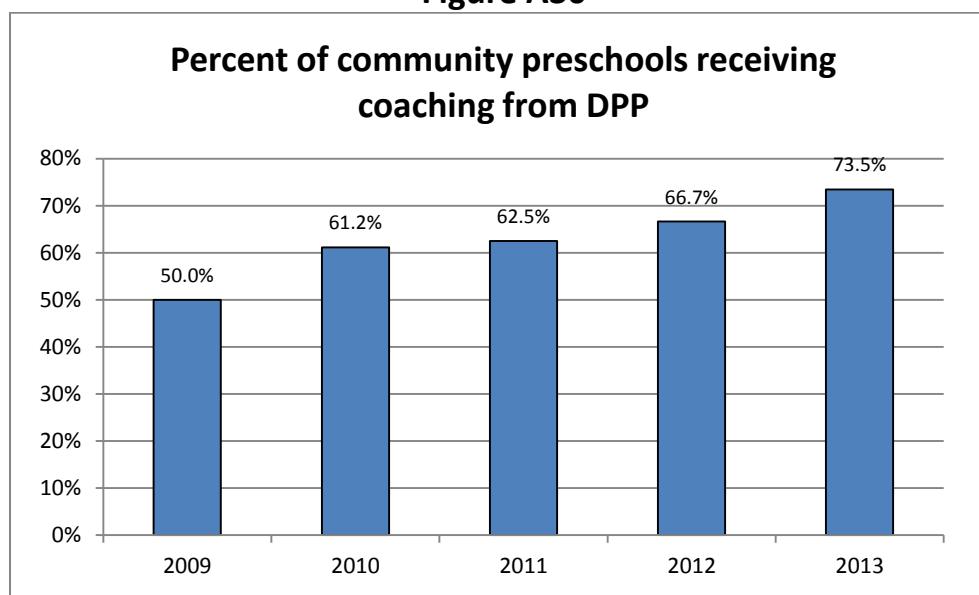


Figure A29



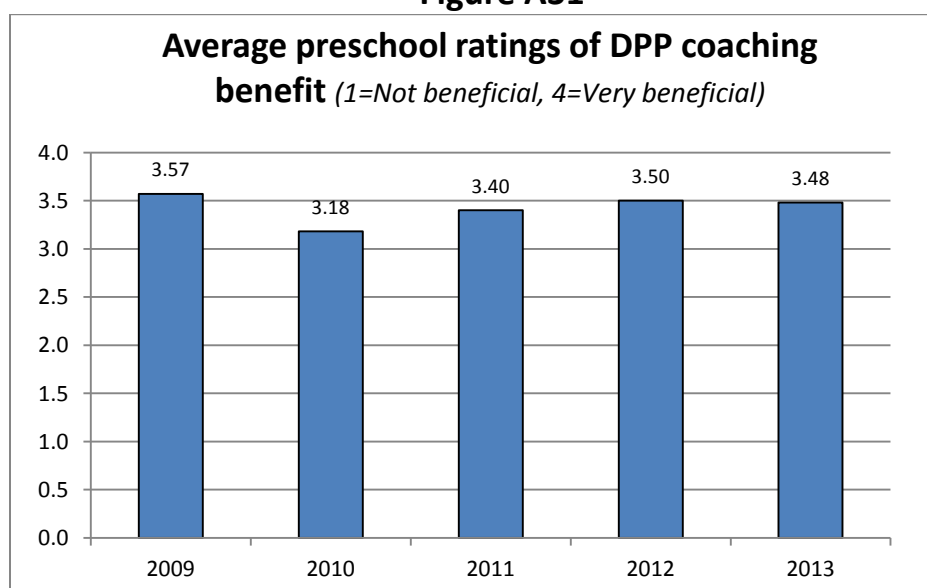
With regards to coaching, the number of community providers utilizing this benefit has been steadily increasing since 2010, reaching 73.5 percent of community providers in 2013.

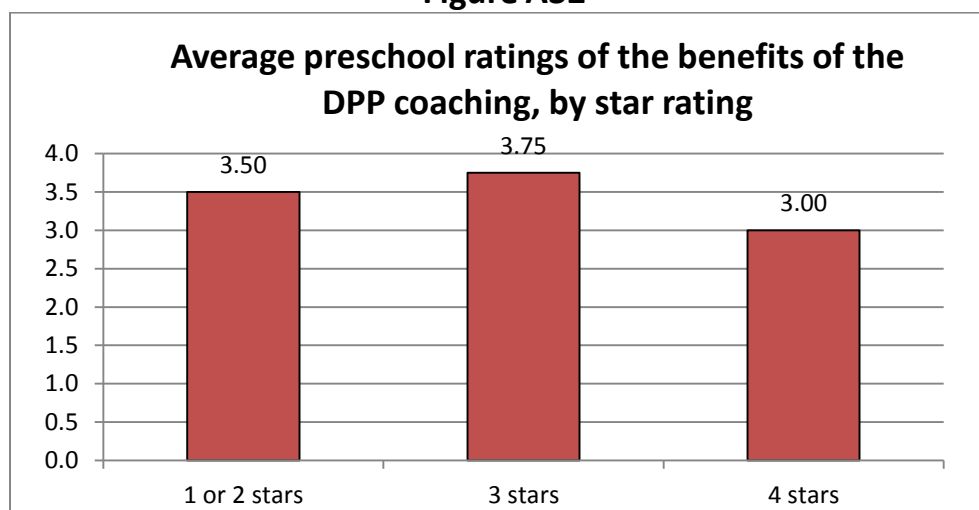
**Figure A30**



Providers who participated in the coaching continued to rate it very highly, as shown in Figure A31, with lower-rated providers (by Qualistar rating) reporting a slightly higher benefit than those with the highest Qualistar rating (Figure A32).

**Figure A31**



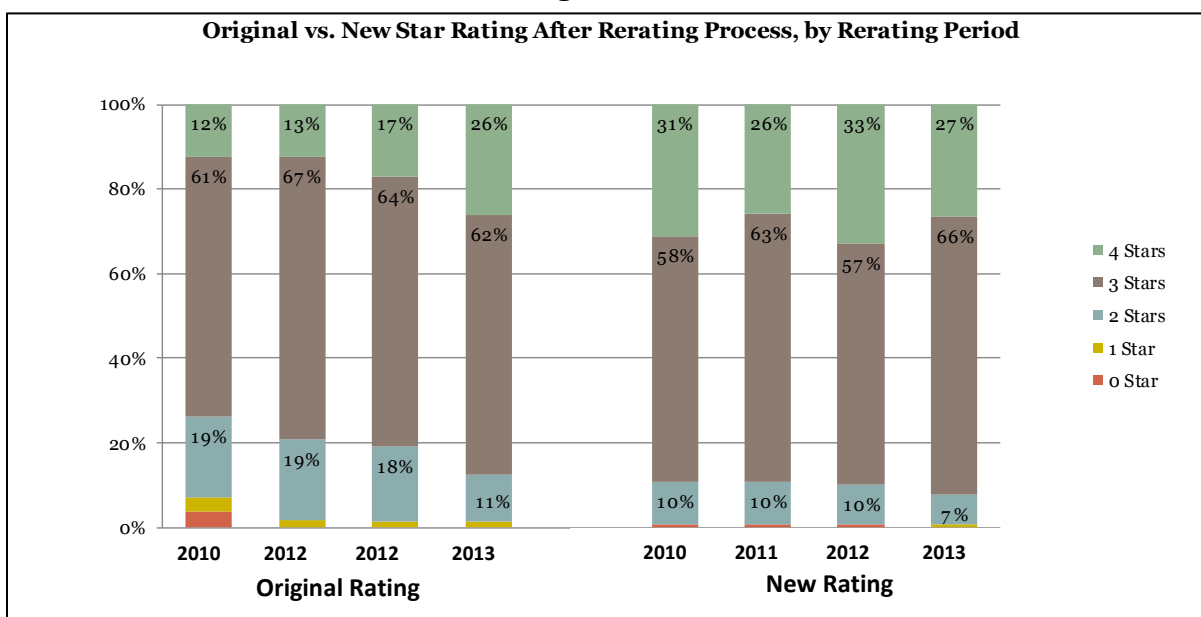
**Figure A32**

This is the fourth year in which DPP sites have gone through the re-rating process and in 2013 a total of 160 classrooms in 83 sites were re-rated by Qualistar. Table A2 below shows the data of the number of providers that have been re-rated for each of the past four years.

**Table A2**

<b>Rerated Classrooms, 2010-2013</b>							
<b>Rerated by March 2010</b>		<b>Rerated April 2010-March 2011</b>		<b>Rerated April 2011-March 2012</b>		<b>Rerated April 2012-March 2013</b>	
# of Classrooms	# of Sites	# of Classrooms	# of Sites	# of Classrooms	# of Sites	# of Classrooms	# of Sites
<b>129</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>83</b>

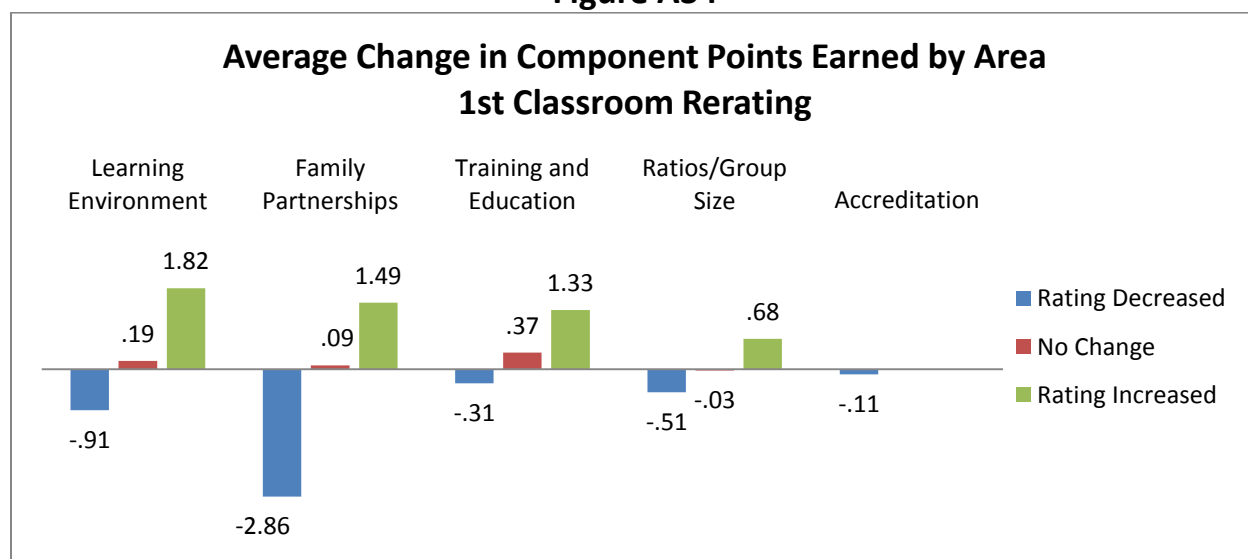
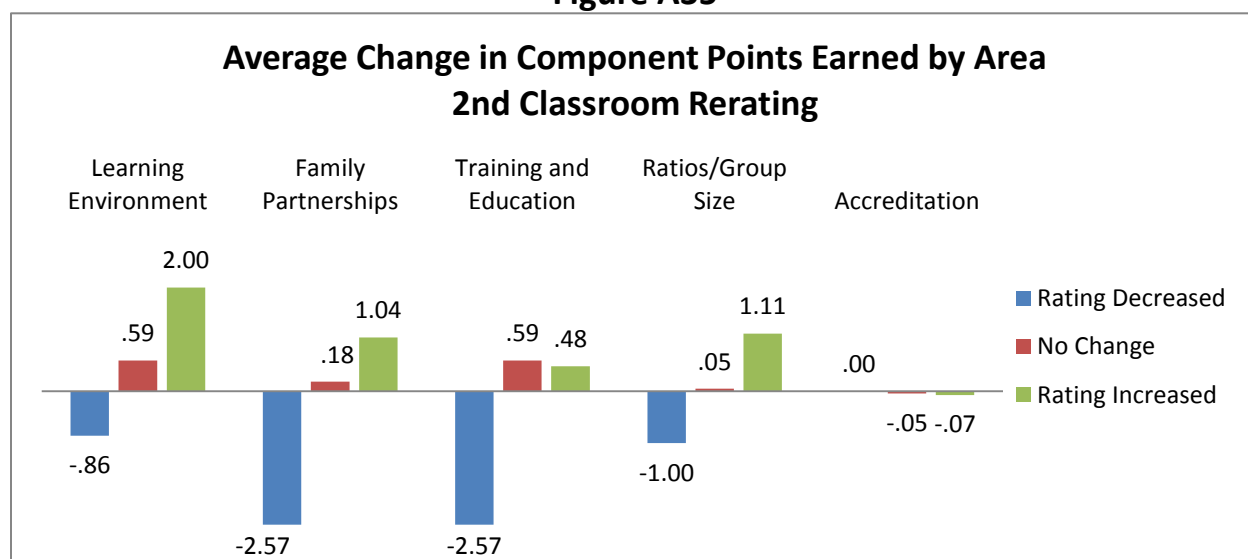
Of the total number of DPP rerated classrooms (160), over 90 percent of them now hold a star rating of 3 or above, with 27 percent of classrooms earning the highest rating of 4 stars. Figure A33 shows the initial star ratings of all re-rated classrooms as well as their new ratings, disaggregated by re-rating time period, illustrating that DPP has the highest percentage of 3 or 4 star rated classrooms in its history.

**Figure A33**

A detailed analysis of provider re-rating results is presented in Appendix G.

In the Qualistar rating process, sites can earn a total of 42 points. The intervals between star rating levels are roughly seven points, so there can be some point movement in the score a site receives without a change in rating. The differences in points earned can also be separately analyzed according to the five Qualistar rating components: (1) learning environment, (2) family partnerships, (3) training and education, (4) adult-to-child ratios and group size, and (5) program accreditation.

For classrooms with a rating decrease, points decreased in both first and second re-rating for family partnerships, with an average loss of 2.86 on first re-rating and 2.57 on second re-rating, and in learning environment, with an average loss of .91 in first re-rating and 0.86 in second re-rating. In addition, on second re-rating a large decrease was seen for training and education, likely reflecting high turnover of staff. On average, classrooms that maintained their rating had very little change in their score in each area. For classrooms that had a star rating increase, additional points earned occurred mainly in learning environment and family partnerships. Figures A34 and A35 illustrate this data.

**Figure A34****Figure A35**

As can be seen in the full re-rating report, included as Appendix B, the overall improvement in the quality of classrooms who participate in the Denver Preschool Program continues to be positive over the past four years, and results are highly consistent when comparing sites that have been re-rated once versus re-rated twice. Over 90 percent of classrooms carry at least a three-star rating. There was however, what appears to be an increase in the number of classrooms that had their ratings decrease in the last two years (up to 16 percent) and it is the highest rated classrooms that continue to be most frequently given lower ratings when they are re-rated. These changes should be monitored in coming years.



## Appendix B: 2012-13 Parent Survey

### Denver Preschool Program (DPP) Survey

Thank you for completing this survey on the Denver Preschool Program (DPP).

All survey responses will be kept confidential.

The survey will take no more than 20 minutes to complete.

**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 their ability to interact with other children | <input type="checkbox"/> Experience a creative environment      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Develop their ability to interact with adults         | <input type="checkbox"/> Experience challenges                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learn academic skills and concepts                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Experience a broad range of activities |
|  | <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 |   |

**2a. 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 community
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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

- ☐ Yes, I know it      ☐ No, I don't know it

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

- ☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ I don't know

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

- ☐ Yes      ☐ No (skip to question 6)

**5a. 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, certified) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Positive Interactions between students and teachers \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) High quality facility, materials, and/or equipment \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Safety \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Substantial parent involvement \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) Diversity (of students and/or staff) \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) Class size or student-to-staff ratio \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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

- Preschool makes it possible for parents (one or both) in this family to work ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Preschool makes it possible for parents (one or both) in this family to work longer hours ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Preschool makes it possible for 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  | <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 have you heard about the Denver Preschool Program (DPP)?** (select all that apply)

- ☐ That it provides access to preschool for 4 year olds in Denver
- ☐ That it helps improve preschool quality
- ☐ That it gives a tuition credit to all families based on income
- ☐ That it was approved by voters as part of a ballot initiative
- ☐ That it will need to be approved by voters every 10 years
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Where do you think the money comes from to support DPP?** (select all that apply)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The federal government | <input type="checkbox"/> Local property tax          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The state government   | <input type="checkbox"/> Denver Public Schools (DPS) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local sales tax        | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above           |

**10. What is your understanding of the relationship between the Denver Preschool Program (DPP) and Denver Public Schools (DPS)?** (select all that apply)

- ☐ The Denver Preschool Program (DPP) offers tuition credits for families to help pay for children to attend preschool, including preschool at Denver Public Schools (DPS)
- ☐ Denver Public Schools (DPS) funds the Denver Preschool Program (DPP)
- ☐ The Denver Preschool Program (DPP) is only available in Denver Public Schools (DPS)
- ☐ The Denver Preschool Program (DPP) provides quality improvement support for preschools including Denver Public Schools (DPS) to improve preschool quality
- ☐ The Denver Preschool Program (DPP) is the name of the preschool education provided by Denver Public Schools (DPS)

**11. What source helped you the MOST when you enrolled your child in the Denver Preschool Program (DPP)?**

(select one)

- ☐ DPP staff member
- ☐ Preschool staff member
- ☐ Friend/acquaintance
- ☐ Family member
- ☐ Website: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ I did not need any help

**12. 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

**12a. How easy was the application process to complete?**

(circle one)

Very difficult                      Very easy  
1                      2                      3                      4

**12b. Did you ask DPP staff for assistance as you completed the application process?**

(select one)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (skip to question 12c)

**12bi. If yes to question #12b, how would you rate the quality of assistance you received?**

(circle one)

Poor                      Excellent  
1                      2                      3                      4

**12c. After applying to DPP, how soon did you receive notification that your child was approved?**

(select one)

- ☐ Less than a week
- ☐ 1-2 weeks
- ☐ 3-4 weeks
- ☐ A month or more

**13. If the DPP tuition credit was NOT available, would you have enrolled your child in preschool anyway?**

(select one)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**14. Did the availability of the DPP tuition credit influence which preschool you selected?**

(select one)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (skip to question 14b)

**14a. If yes to question #14, how important was the tuition credit in your preschool selection decision?**

(circle one and then skip to question #15)

Not very important                      Very important  
1                      2                      3                      4

**14b. If no to question #14, would a larger tuition credit have influenced you to enroll your child in a different preschool?**

(select one)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (skip to question 15)
- ☐ I don't know (skip to question 15)

15. Did the availability of the DPP tuition credit increase the number of hours that your child attends preschool? (select one)

☐ Yes ☐ No

16. Was your child enrolled in preschool or daycare prior to this school year? (select one)

☐ Yes ☐ No

16a. If yes to question #16, please specify the name of the prior preschool/daycare and the city where it is located (include your current preschool/daycare if your child was enrolled there in the previous year).

Preschool/daycare name: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

17. As long as your family's situation stays the same, do you expect that the DPP tuition credit will help you to keep your child continuously enrolled for the entire school year? (select one)

☐ Yes ☐ No

18. If money to fund the DPP program was limited, how would you prefer to receive the SAME TOTAL tuition credit amounts? (select one)

☐ Spread over 9 months  
☐ Spread over 12 months

19. How would you prefer to receive general information about DPP? (select all that apply)

☐ Email ☐ Mail ☐ DPP website  
☐ Text message ☐ Twitter ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Via the preschool ☐ Facebook

20. How many people (including you) reside in your household? \_\_\_\_\_

21. How many children (under 18) reside in your household? \_\_\_\_\_

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

☐ English ☐ Vietnamese ☐ Mandarin  
☐ Spanish ☐ Korean ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Arabic ☐ Somali

23. If this survey were conducted online, would it be easier for you to complete? (circle one)

Yes No

24. If you would be willing to participate in a follow-up survey in the future, please provide your email address and/or 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  
☐ Walmart

## Appendix C: 2012-13 Provider Survey – Community Sites

Community Providers- DPP Survey Print 2012-13													
Denver Preschool Program Survey													
<p>Thank you for volunteering to complete this survey on the Denver Preschool Program. All survey responses will be kept completely confidential. We estimate that this survey will take no more than 20 minutes to complete</p>													
Preschool Information													
<p><b>1. Provider/agency name if applicable (e.g.DPS, Catholic Charities, Family Star)</b></p> <input type="text"/>													
<p><b>*2. Preschool (site) name:</b></p> <input type="text"/>													
<p><b>*3. Preschool address:</b></p> <input type="text"/>													
<p><b>4. Your name:</b></p> <input type="text"/>													
<p><b>*5. What is your current job title at this preschool site?</b></p> <input type="text"/>													
<p><b>6. How long have you been employed in your current position at this preschool site?</b></p> <input type="text"/>													
<p><b>7. How would you characterize the preschool's curriculum? (select all that apply)</b></p> <table border="0"> <tbody> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Creative Curriculum</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> DPS Curriculum</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> High Scope</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Project Approach</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Montessori</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> No specific curriculum, play-based</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Reggio Emilia</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify below)</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><input type="text"/></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		<input type="checkbox"/> Creative Curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/> DPS Curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/> High Scope	<input type="checkbox"/> Project Approach	<input type="checkbox"/> Montessori	<input type="checkbox"/> No specific curriculum, play-based	<input type="checkbox"/> Reggio Emilia		<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify below)		<input type="text"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Creative Curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/> DPS Curriculum												
<input type="checkbox"/> High Scope	<input type="checkbox"/> Project Approach												
<input type="checkbox"/> Montessori	<input type="checkbox"/> No specific curriculum, play-based												
<input type="checkbox"/> Reggio Emilia													
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify below)													
<input type="text"/>													

## Community Providers- DPP Survey Print 2012-13

### \* 8. Why did your preschool opt to enroll in DPP? (select all that apply)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Funding for quality rating                        | <input type="checkbox"/> DPP will improve access to preschool           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching support                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> DPP will ease the financial burden on families |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional development funds                    | <input type="checkbox"/> As part of larger organizational decision      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial assistance with materials and equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> I do not know or remember                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify below)                      |   |

### \* 9. If you personally completed the DPP application, how easy was the application to complete? (select one)

- ☐ 1: Very difficult    
 ☐ 2    
 ☐ 3    
 ☐ 4: Very easy    
 ☐ Not Applicable

### \* 10. Has DPP affected your preschool's enrollment numbers?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No (skip to question #13)  
☐ I do not know (skip to question #13)

## DPP Enrollment Numbers

### \* 11. Please indicate whether one or more new children have enrolled in your preschool as a result of DPP.

	Yes	No	I do not know
Infants and Toddlers (0-36 months)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Preschoolers (3-5 years)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### \* 12. Please indicate whether one or more children have left your preschool as a result of DPP.

	Yes	No	I do not know
Infants and Toddlers (0-36 months)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Preschoolers (3-5 years)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Interest in Program

### Community Providers- DPP Survey Print 2012-13

**\*13. Since your preschool first enrolled in DPP, has there been an increase in the number of parents interested in enrolling their children in your preschool?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ I do not know

### DPP Enrollment Patterns

**\*14. Has DPP affected the number of hours that children enroll in your preschool?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No (skip to question #17)  
☐ I do not know (skip to question #17)

### DPP Enrollment Patterns

**\*15. Please indicate whether one or more children have increased their hours as a result of DPP.**

	Yes	No	I do not know
Infants and Toddlers (0-36 months)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Preschoolers (3-5 years)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\*16. Please indicate whether one or more children have decreased their hours as a result of DPP.**

	Yes	No	I do not know
Infants and Toddlers (0-36 months)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Preschoolers (3-5 years)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### DPP Efforts to Inform Parents

**\*17. How would you rate DPP's efforts to inform parents about the availability of tuition credits?**

- ☐ 1: Poor      ☐ 2      ☐ 3      ☐ 4: Excellent

**\*18. How would you rate DPP's efforts to inform parents about its quality improvement process?**

- ☐ 1: Poor      ☐ 2      ☐ 3      ☐ 4: Excellent

## Community Providers- DPP Survey Print 2012-13

### Parent Decisions about Preschool

**\*19. Parents 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"/> Hours of operation/schedule  | <input type="checkbox"/> Particular curriculum or philosophy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Impression during site visit | <input type="checkbox"/> Convenient location                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cost of tuition              | <input type="checkbox"/> Reputation of quality               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify below) |  |

**\*20. Which of the following do you believe the majority of parents use to determine a preschool's reputation? (select all that apply)**

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

**\*21. How strongly do you agree with the following statement? "In general, parents can accurately determine preschool quality."**

- ☐ 1: Strongly disagree      ☐ 2      ☐ 3      ☐ 4: Strongly agree

**\*22. 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).**

Friendly and knowledgeable leadership	<input type="text"/>
Qualified teachers (e.g., experienced, well-educated)	<input type="text"/>
Positive interactions between students and teachers	<input type="text"/>
High quality facility, materials, and/or equipment	<input type="text"/>
Safety	<input type="text"/>
Substantial parent involvement	<input type="text"/>
Diversity (of students and/or staff)	<input type="text"/>
Class size or student-to-staff ratio	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>



**Community Providers- DPP Survey Print 2012-13****Parent Recruitment**

**\*23. Has your preschool recruited parents to apply for the DPP tuition credits?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No (skip to question #26)

**Parent Recruitment**

**\*24. What parent recruitment activities has your preschool engaged in? (select all that apply)**

- ☐ Distribution of printed information on-site  
☐ Individual encouragement for parents to apply  
☐ Individual assistance for parents with applications  
☐ Discussion at parent meetings  
☐ Other (please specify below)

**\*25. Since the beginning of this school year, how much time has your preschool staff spent per month recruiting parents to apply to DPP?**

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

**Logistics**

**26. How much time does your preschool staff spend per month completing attendance paperwork?**

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

### Community Providers- DPP Survey Print 2012-13

**\*27. From your perspective, how smoothly do you think the DPP enrollment process works for parents?**

- ☐ 1: Not smoothly    
 ☐ 2    
 ☐ 3    
 ☐ 4: Very smoothly

**\*28. How smoothly is the DPP tuition credit payment process working for your preschool?**

- ☐ 1: Not smoothly    
 ☐ 2    
 ☐ 3    
 ☐ 4: Very smoothly

**\*29. Does the preschool receive the DPP tuition credits in a timely manner?**

- ☐ 1: Rarely    
 ☐ 2    
 ☐ 3    
 ☐ 4: Always

**\*30. How comfortable do you feel explaining to parents how DPP tuition credit amounts are determined?**

- ☐ 1: Not comfortable    
 ☐ 2    
 ☐ 3    
 ☐ 4: Very comfortable

### DPP Assistance

**\*31. Have you asked for any administrative assistance from DPP within the last 12 months?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No (skip to question #34)

### DPP Assistance

**\*32. What type of assistance did you request?**

**\*33. How useful was the assistance?**

- ☐ 1: Not useful    
 ☐ 2    
 ☐ 3    
 ☐ 4: Very useful

### Quality Improvement

## Community Providers- DPP Survey Print 2012-13

**\*34. Has your preschool taken advantage of the DPP quality improvement process and resources?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (skip to question #38)

### DPP Quality Improvement Process

**\*35. Which component of DPP's quality improvement process was the MOST helpful for improving the quality of your preschool?**

- ☐ Coaching support
- ☐ Funding for quality rating
- ☐ Professional development and training
- ☐ Financial assistance with materials and equipment

### DPP Coaching

**\*36. Has your preschool staff received any coaching from DPP?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (skip to question #38)

### DPP Coaching

**\*37. How beneficial was the coaching from DPP overall?**

- ☐ 1: Not beneficial      ☐ 2      ☐ 3      ☐ 4: Very beneficial

### Quality Ratings

**\*38. Do you believe the most recent quality ratings that your preschool received to be accurate assessments of the preschool's quality?**

	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Qualistar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Community Providers- DPP Survey Print 2012-13

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

### Improvements and Changes

**\*40. To what extent has the presence of DPP encouraged you to improve the quality of your preschool program?**

- ☐ 1: Not at all
 ☐ 2
 ☐ 3
 ☐ 4: To a great extent

**\*41. Has your preschool made any significant changes as a result of participating in DPP?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No (skip to question #43)

### Changes

**\*42. What type(s) of changes has your preschool made as a result of DPP? (select all that apply)**

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

### Concerns

### Community Providers- DPP Survey Print 2012-13

**\*43. What is your biggest operational concern about DPP?**

- ☐ No operational concerns
- ☐ The time/effort to recruit parents
- ☐ The time/effort to manage the tuition credit process
- ☐ The time/effort to track attendance
- ☐ The time/effort to prepare for the rating process
- ☐ Fairness/accuracy of the rating process
- ☐ The time/effort for parents to enroll in DPP
- ☐ Other (please specify below)

**\*44. What is your biggest policy concern about DPP?**

- ☐ No policy concerns
- ☐ DPP may draw attention away from 0-3 education
- ☐ Parents may transfer their children for the final year of preschool
- ☐ DPP may affect the preschool marketplace
- ☐ There is a lack of public awareness about DPP
- ☐ Other (please specify below)

### Effectiveness

**\*45. How effectively does DPP work for the families it serves?**

- ☐ 1: Not effectively      ☐ 2      ☐ 3      ☐ 4: Very effectively

**46. How effectively does DPP work for families whose primary language is not English?**

- ☐ 1: Not effectively      ☐ 2      ☐ 3      ☐ 4: Very effectively

**\*47. To what extent do you believe that DPP is accomplishing its goal of providing quality preschool to Denver children?**

- ☐ 1: Not at all      ☐ 2      ☐ 3      ☐ 4: To a great extent

## Community Providers- DPP Survey Print 2012-13

**\*48. Please explain why you believe DPP is or is not accomplishing its goal of providing quality preschool to Denver children.**

**\*49. Where do you think the money comes from to support DPP? (select all that apply)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local property tax          | <input type="checkbox"/> The federal government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The state government        | <input type="checkbox"/> Local sales tax        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Denver Public Schools (DPS) | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above      |

## Suggestions and Comments

**50. How would you prefer to receive general information on DPP? (select all that apply)**

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Text message           | <input type="checkbox"/> Twitter  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone              | <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mail                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Email    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |                                   |

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

**52. Please use the space below for any other comments, questions, or concerns.**

## Thank You!

Thank you for completing the Denver Preschool Program Survey! Your \$25 gift card for The Bookies (Denver bookstore) will be mailed within a few weeks.

## Appendix D: Data Collection Methods

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

In the 2007-08 school year, the first year for the program, the number of providers that enrolled was limited and the first sites were not approved until early in 2008. As a consequence, families receiving tuition credits were concentrated in a 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.

During DPP's second school year, from August 1, 2008 through July 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 data collection strategies used in 2008-09 were continued every school year up to 2012-13. For the 2012-13 school year, five full years of collected parent and provider survey data allows APA to present trends in the survey results. For the purpose of presenting the data, the 2007-08 school year is referred to as 2008; the 2008-09 school year is referred to as 2009; the 2009-10 school year is referred to as 2010; the 2010-11 school year is referred to as 2011; the 2011-12 school year is referred to as 2012; and the 2012-13 school year is referred to as 2013.

In 2013, information was obtained from surveys, analysis of DPP enrollment data, provider data, DPS TCAP data, and provider interviews. The evaluation team analyzed 154 completed surveys from a sample of parents and 67 completed surveys from a sample of DPS, community-based, and home-based preschools. Providers were able to complete surveys online or on paper. Spanish language versions of the surveys were made available.

## Appendix E: 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 14, 2012, 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 F.

Table E1 portrays the breakdown of children by ethnic and family income tier. As in prior years, approximately half of the children enrolled in DPP were Hispanic. Consistent with prior years, in 2012-13 over two thirds (67 percent) of DPP families reported incomes of \$47,000 or less.

**Table E1**

<b>All 2013 DPP Families by Income Tier and Child's Ethnicity</b>												
<b>Child's Ethnicity</b>	<b>Income Tier</b>											
	<b>Up to \$21,200</b>		<b>\$21,201-\$47,700</b>		<b>\$47,701-\$72,080</b>		<b>More Than \$72,080</b>		<b>Not Reported</b>		<b>Totals</b>	
	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Black</b>	336	7.7%	134	3.1%	18	0.4%	16	0.4%	41	0.9%	<b>545</b>	<b>12.5%</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	1160	26.6%	687	15.8%	102	2.3%	63	1.4%	104	2.4%	<b>2116</b>	<b>48.6%</b>
<b>White</b>	118	2.7%	157	3.6%	156	3.6%	464	10.7%	305	7.0%	<b>1200</b>	<b>27.6%</b>
<b>Other</b>	178	4.1%	129	3.0%	52	1.2%	74	1.7%	42	1.0%	<b>475</b>	<b>10.9%</b>
<b>Not Reported</b>	7	0.2%	8	0.2%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.0%	<b>18</b>	<b>0.4%</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1799</b>	<b>41.3%</b>	<b>1115</b>	<b>25.6%</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>14.2%</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>11.3%</b>	<b>4354</b>	<b>100%</b>

The 2013 survey sample was drawn from the population described in Table E1. 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 9 additional parents in order to ensure results were representative of the DPP population. By adding these 9 parents to the surveyed total, the sample was broadly representative of the population by income, child's ethnicity, home language, and the Qualistar ratings of preschools where the children were enrolled.

In 2013, APA sent surveys to a total of 209 parents, and received 154 completed surveys from these parents. This was a comparable response rate (73.6 percent) to previous years. Table E2 shows the returned parent surveys broken down by ethnicity and income level.



Table E2

2013 Returned DPP Parent Surveys by Income Tier and Child's Ethnicity												
Child's Ethnicity	Income Tier											
	Up to \$21,200		\$21,201-\$47,700		\$47,701-\$72,080		More Than \$72,080		Not Reported		Totals	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Black</b>	6	3.9%	6	3.9%	1	0.6%	2	1.3%	1	0.6%	<b>16</b>	<b>10.4%</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	34	22.1%	20	13.0%	4	2.6%	4	2.6%	2	1.3%	<b>64</b>	<b>41.6%</b>
<b>White</b>	3	1.9%	7	4.5%	8	5.2%	25	16.2%	15	9.7%	<b>58</b>	<b>37.7%</b>
<b>Other</b>	6	3.9%	4	2.6%	1	0.6%	3	1.9%	2	1.3%	<b>16</b>	<b>10.4%</b>
<b>Not Reported</b>	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>31.8%</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>24.0%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>9.1%</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>22.1%</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>13.0%</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 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 November 5, 2012, at which time the sample of providers to be surveyed was drawn.

Table E3 categorizes these preschool sites by type of provider, total number of classrooms, total number of DPP classrooms, and Qualistar rating. DPS preschools represent 31 percent of all DPP preschool sites. Of the non-DPS (community) sites, 8 percent were home-based and the rest were center-based sites. Approximately 95 percent of the preschool sites in 2013 had between one and five classrooms, an increase from 75 percent in prior years. Under 4 percent of DPP sites in 2013 did not have a Qualistar rating, a decrease from over 6 percent in 2012, 11 percent in 2011 and 16 percent in 2010. Among the sites that were rated, 27.4 percent earned a four-star rating and 57.5 percent earned a three-star rating.

**Table E3**

<b>All 2013 DPP Providers</b>		
<b>Provider Type</b>		
<b>DPS</b>	78	31.0%
<b>Community Center-Based Sites</b>	154	61.1%
<b>Community Home-Based Sites</b>	20	7.9%
<b>Number of DPP Classrooms</b>		
<b>1 Classroom</b>	101	40.1%
<b>2 Classrooms</b>	64	25.4%
<b>3-5 Classrooms</b>	75	29.8%
<b>6 or More Classrooms</b>	12	4.8%
<b>Star Rating</b>		
<b>1 or 2 Stars</b>	29	11.5%
<b>3 Stars</b>	145	57.5%
<b>4 Stars</b>	69	27.4%
<b>Scheduled or In-Process</b>	0	0.0%
<b>Provisional</b>	2	0.8%
<b>Intro to Quality</b>	7	2.8%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The preschool survey sample was drawn from the distribution of preschools described in Table E3. This sample was stratified according to provider type, number of total classrooms, star ratings, and location (zip code). In November 2012, there were 11 providers enrolled in DPP that managed more than one preschool site. These 11 providers manage 40 preschools in total and we sent surveys to 18 of these preschools.

Of the 100 preschools surveyed, 67 returned surveys, for a response rate of 67 percent, a ten point increase from 2012. Both the surveyed preschools and the preschools that returned surveys were representative of the overall population of DPP preschools. Table E4 presents the distribution of preschools that returned surveys.

**Table E4**

<b>All 2013 Provider Returned Surveys</b>		
<b>Provider Type</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>DPS</b>	25	37.3%
<b>Community Center-Based Sites</b>	41	61.2%
<b>Community Home-Based Sites</b>	1	1.5%
<b>Number of DPP Classrooms</b>		
<b>1 Classroom</b>	22	32.8%
<b>2 Classrooms</b>	20	29.9%
<b>3-5 Classrooms</b>	22	32.8%
<b>6 or More Classrooms</b>	3	4.5%
<b>Star Rating</b>		
<b>1 or 2 Stars</b>	7	10.4%
<b>3 Stars</b>	45	67.2%
<b>4 Stars</b>	11	16.4%
<b>Scheduled or In-Process</b>	0	0.0%
<b>Provisional</b>	1	1.5%
<b>Intro to Quality</b>	3	4.5%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## Appendix F: Description of Demographic Recoding

**Table F1**

<b>Coding of Child's Ethnicity</b>	
<b>Coded Ethnicity Category</b>	<b>Included in Category</b>
<b>Black</b>	African American; Black
<b>Hispanic</b>	Hispanic
<b>White</b>	White; White (Not of Hispanic origin); White (not Hispanic)
<b>Other</b>	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"
<b>Ethnicity Not Reported</b>	Not provided; "Missing data"

**Table F2**

<b>Coding of Home Language</b>	
<b>Coded Home Language Category</b>	<b>Included in Category</b>
<b>English</b>	English; Mostly or only English; "Any combination of 2 or more languages beginning with English, such as English/Arabic"
<b>Spanish</b>	Spanish; "Any combination of 2 or more languages beginning with Spanish, such as Spanish/English"
<b>Other</b>	Not Reported, Not Provided, Not Selected; Arabic; Ana; Dina; 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.	

## Appendix G: Analysis of Re-Rated DPP Providers

### Introduction

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An important aim of the Denver Preschool Program (DPP) is to improve the quality of preschool available to families in the Denver area. When preschool sites choose to participate in the Denver Preschool Program, they receive a rating from Qualistar Colorado that evaluates the quality of their program in several areas: 1) learning environment, 2) family partnerships, 3) training and education, 4) adult-to-child ratios and group size, and 5) program accreditation. The total number of points a site earns in all of these areas determines their star rating, which is on a scale of zero to four stars.

The Denver Preschool Program allocates varying amounts of funds to support quality improvement efforts for each DPP participating provider based upon their star rating. These funds may be used to purchase classroom equipment, materials and other resources that improve the quality of the indoor and outdoor learning environments. Quality improvement funds may also be used to increase the level of education and training of the provider's classroom staff and administration through approved seminars, workshops, and conferences as well as to provide funding to enable staff to attend college level early childhood education classes and college level courses leading to an education related degree. Additionally, coaching services are provided by the Denver Preschool Program to support all participating classrooms.

Sites that participate in the Denver Preschool Program 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 further illustrates the influence that the program has on the preschool community through its emphasis on quality improvement.

This is the fourth year in which DPP sites have gone through the re-rating process and, as such, many sites have been through the re-rating process not once, but twice. Therefore, in addition to looking at re-rating results by re-rating year, this report will also examine re-rating results by whether it was the first or second re-rating.

### Understanding the Qualistar Rating™

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According to Qualistar, classroom ratings are based on their scores in the following five quality components:

#### **Learning Environment**

This component utilizes the environment rating scales to award points based on the measured quality of physical classroom space, personal care routines, language and reasoning activities, child interactions and program structure. Points earned in this area can range from 0 to 10.

#### **Family Partnerships**

This component measures and awards points based on information about communication, collaboration, and family involvement opportunities collected through family questionnaires and program documentation. Points earned in this area can range from 0 to 10.

### Training and Education

This component measures and awards points based on the formal training staff has received as well as their levels of experience, with separate requirements for center administrators and child care providers/home providers. Points earned in this area can range from 0 to 10.

### Adult-to-Child Ratios and Group Size

This component measures and awards points based on adult-to-child ratios and overall classroom group size. For a preschool classroom, a ratio of one adult to eight children (1:8) and a group size of fifteen or less children would earn full points (up to eight points for adult-to-child ratios and two points for group size). Points earned in this area can therefore range from 0 to 10.

### Program Accreditation

Sites can also earn an additional 2 points for receiving and maintaining program accreditation through an approved organization (for example, NAEYC and NAFCC).

**The combined point total from each of these areas determines the site's star rating. The following table illustrates the points needed for each star level:**

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

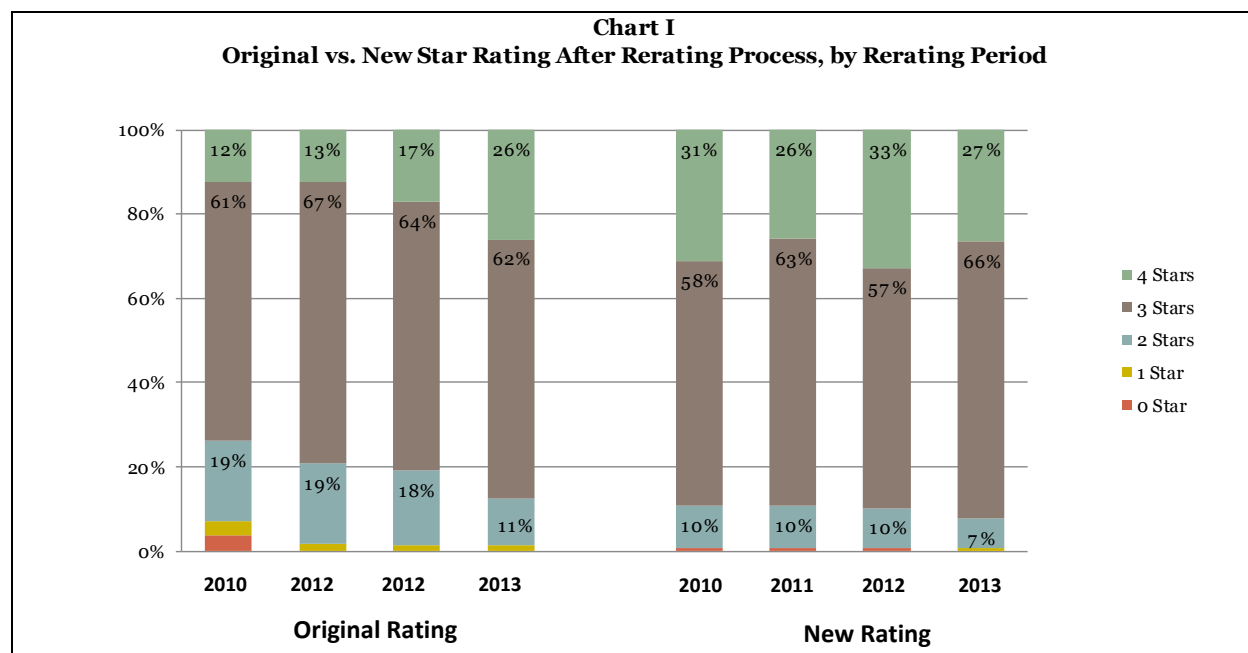
Results are first shown for each group of re-rated classrooms by rating time period, then by whether it was the first or second time a program had been re-rated.

### Overall Results for all Re-rating Time Periods

The table below shows the number of sites and classrooms that have been re-rated by March 31, 2013:

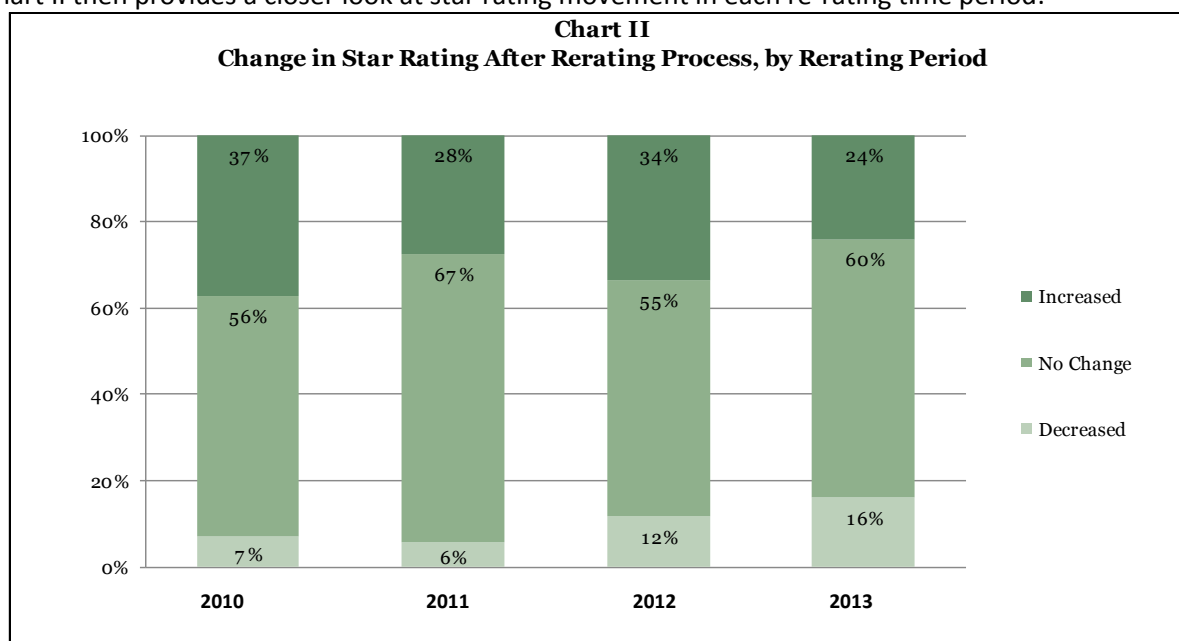
Re-rated by March 2010		Re-rated April 2010-March 2011		Re-rated April 2011-March 2012		Re-rated April 2012-March 2013	
# of Classrooms	# of Sites	# of Classrooms	# of Sites	# of Classrooms	# of Sites	# of Classrooms	# of Sites
129	72	120	63	146	80	160	83

Chart I identifies the initial star ratings of all re-rated classrooms as well as their new ratings, disaggregated by re-rating time period.



Initial star ratings for the 2010 group were slightly lower than in subsequent years, with just over 70 percent of classrooms having an initial rating of three stars or more, compared to roughly 80 percent of classrooms in the 2011 and 2012 groups and nearly 90 percent of 2013 re-rated classrooms receiving a similar initial rating of three stars or more. These percentages increased when all classrooms were re-rated as can be seen in the columns on the right. Star ratings after re-rating remained fairly consistent in each year, with roughly 90 percent of classrooms having a re-rating of at least three stars, and about 30 percent having a four-star rating.

Chart II then provides a closer look at star rating movement in each re-rating time period:



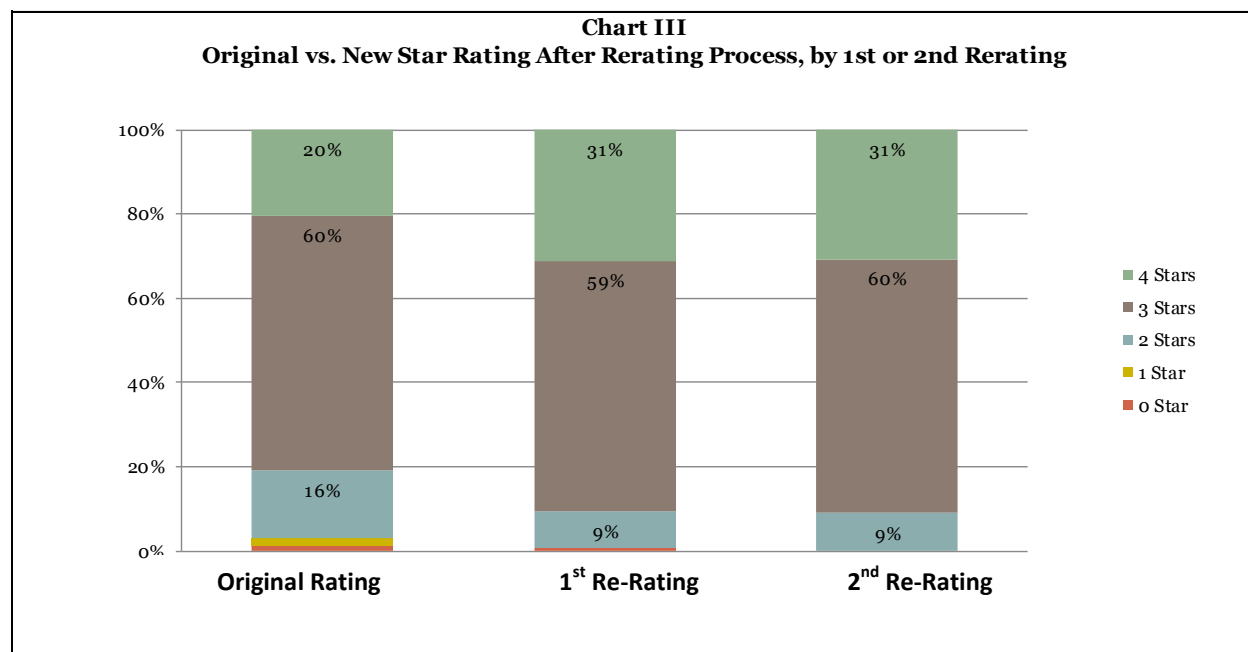
As was the case with original versus new star ratings, results were fairly consistent across re-rating time period groups; however, there appears to be an uptick in the percentage of classrooms that had their re-rating decrease after their original rating (16 percent).

### *Changes in Star Rating Results by 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Re-Rating*

The following table shows the number of sites and classrooms that have an initial rating (251 sites, 562 classrooms), the number that have been re-rated once (174 sites, 338 classrooms) and the number that have been re-rated twice (50 sites, 78 classrooms), also as of March 2013.

	Have Initial DPP Rating		Have 1st Re-Rating		Have 2nd Re-Rating	
	# of Classrooms	# of Sites	# of Classrooms	# of Sites	# of Classrooms	# of Sites
<b>Total</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>50</b>

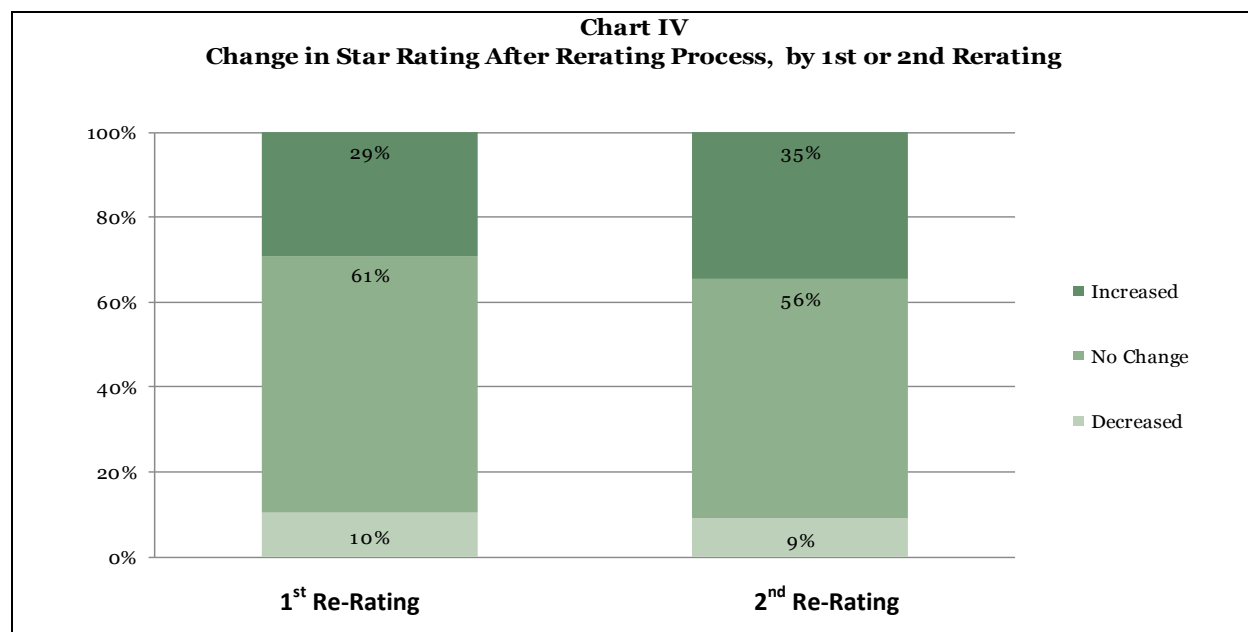
Charts III – X look more closely at classrooms by whether they had been re-rated once or twice. First, a comparison of original star ratings compared to their new rating in Chart III below:



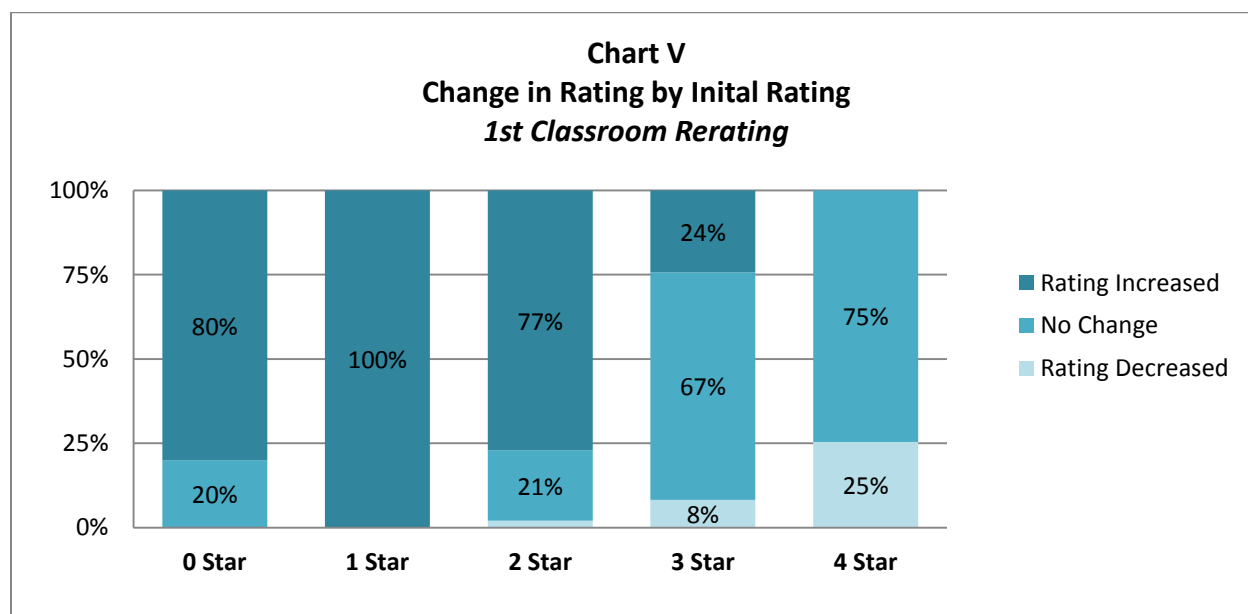
Overall, for the 562 classrooms that have an initial rating, 80 percent started out as a star rating three or higher (20 percent were four star rated). Sixteen percent had a two star rating and the remaining four percent had a one star or provisional rating. Star rating results were nearly identical for the 338 classrooms that had been re-rated once as the 78 classrooms that had been re-rated twice; 31 percent having a four-star rating, nearly 60 percent had a three-star rating, and nine percent had a two-star rating. One percent of classrooms still had a provisional rating after their first re-rating, while no classrooms that had been re-rated twice had a rating of less than two stars.

Results were slightly more varied when looking at the percentage of providers that had their rating increase, decrease, or stay the same in Chart IV.



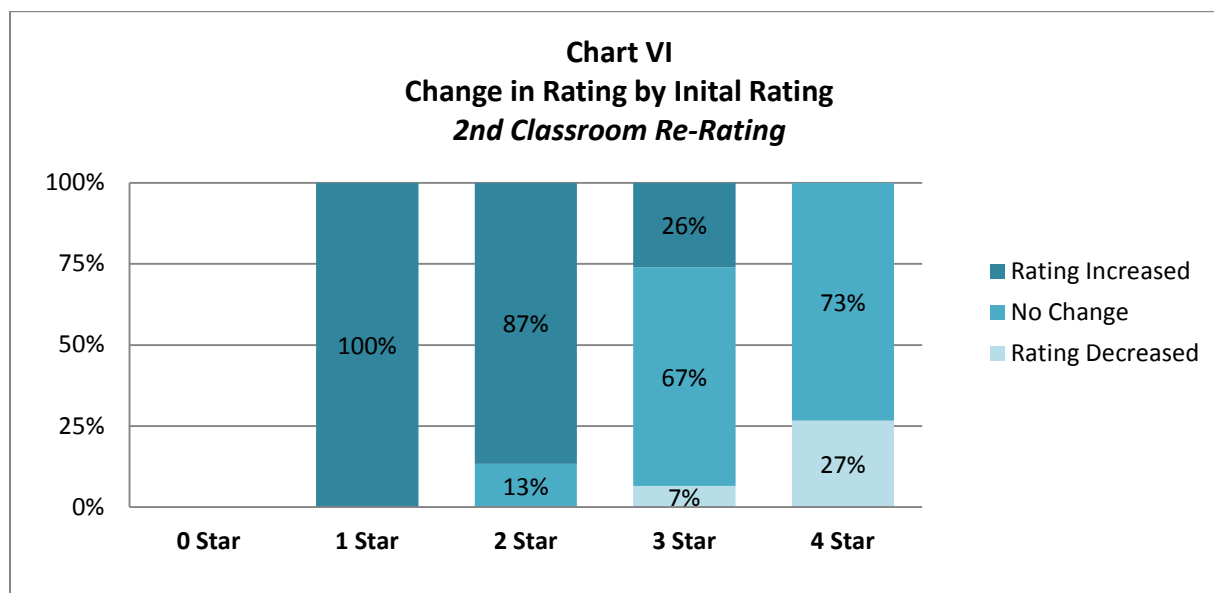


Roughly the same percentage of classrooms maintained or increased their rating (90 percent), though a slightly higher percentage increased their rating after their second re-rating (35 percent vs. 29 percent). Chart V and VI consider whether the rating of each classroom increased, decreased, or stayed the same based upon their initial star rating.

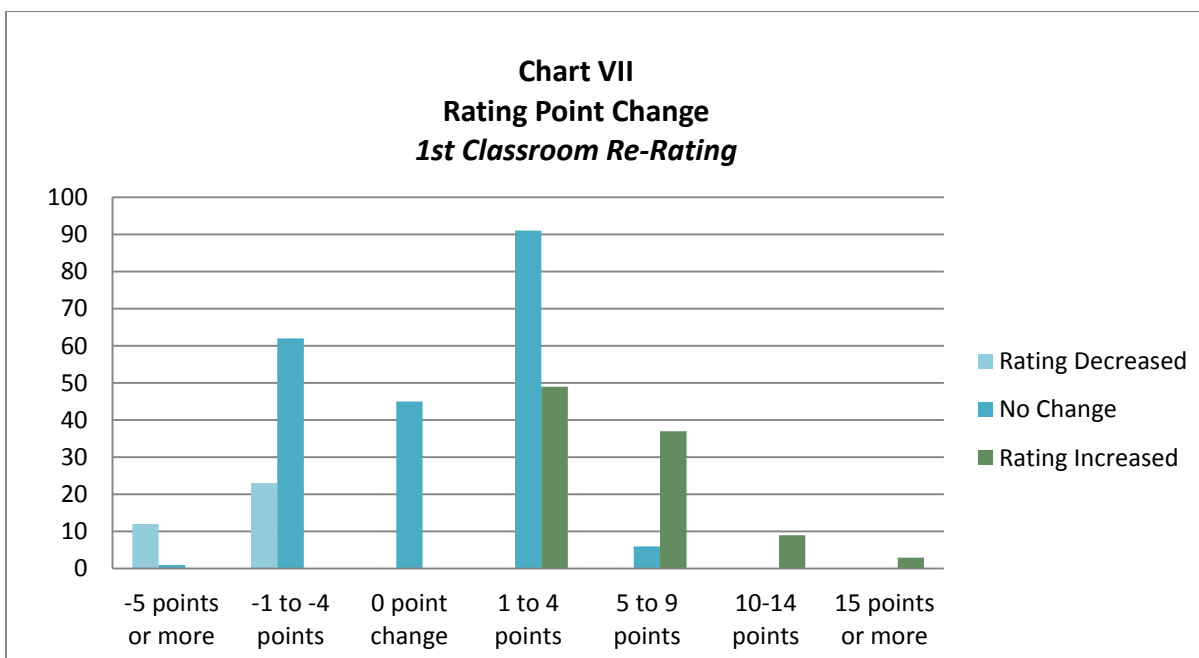


After their first re-rating, the majority of provisional, one and two-star classrooms increased their rating. Eighty percent of provisional (0 star) and 100 percent of one star classrooms increased their rating. Nearly 80 percent of classrooms with an initial two-star rating increased their star rating and 21 percent had their rating stay the same, with only two percent having their rating decrease. Fewer classrooms with an initial three-star rating increased their rating (24 percent), with the majority maintaining their rating (67 percent), and less than 10 percent being re-rated as less than three stars. Seventy-five

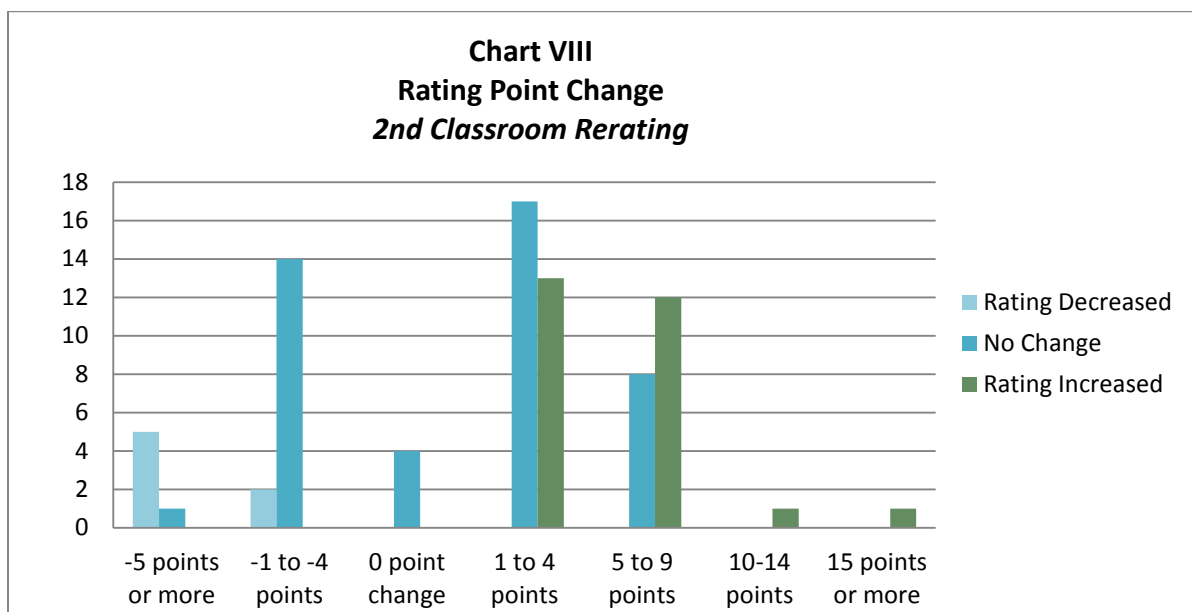
percent of four star rated classrooms had their rating stay the same, while a quarter had their rating decrease – the largest percentage decrease experienced by any rating category. Results were consistent when classrooms were re-rated twice as shown in Chart VI below.



As mentioned previously, programs can earn up to a total of 42 points. The intervals between star rating levels are roughly seven points, so there can be a fair amount of point movement in the score a site receives without a change in rating. Chart VII and VIII illustrate the change in rating points earned based upon whether the classroom's rating increased, decreased, or remained the same. Chart VII first looks at classrooms that have been re-rated once.

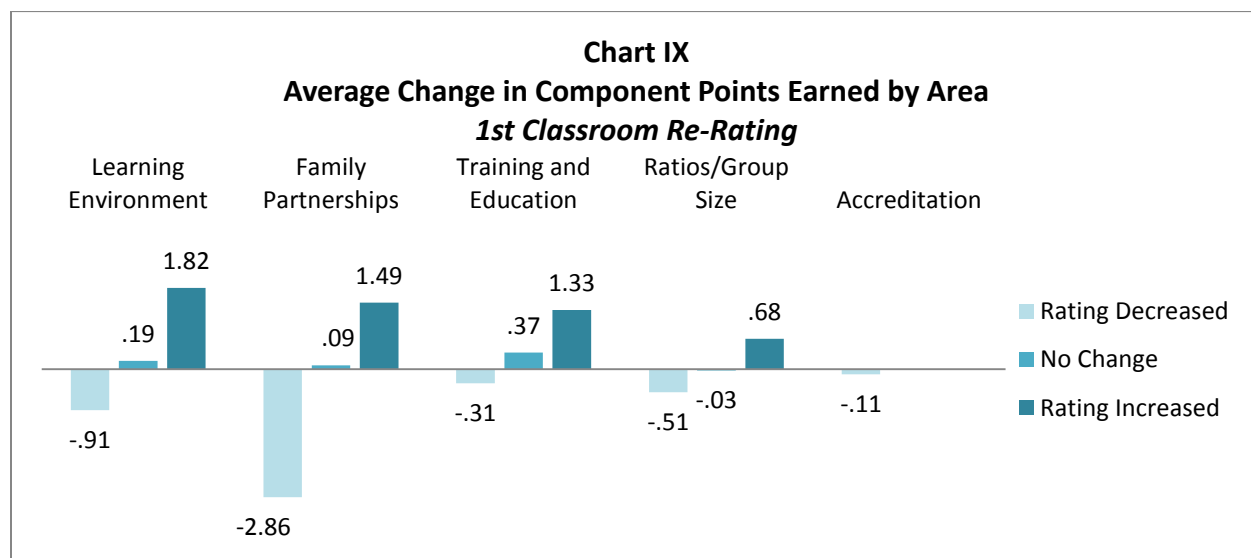


While 29 percent of classrooms increased their star rating after their first re-rating, there was still positive movement for the majority of classrooms (58 percent). Twenty-nine percent of classrooms received fewer points during re-rating, with less than five percent decreasing more than five points.

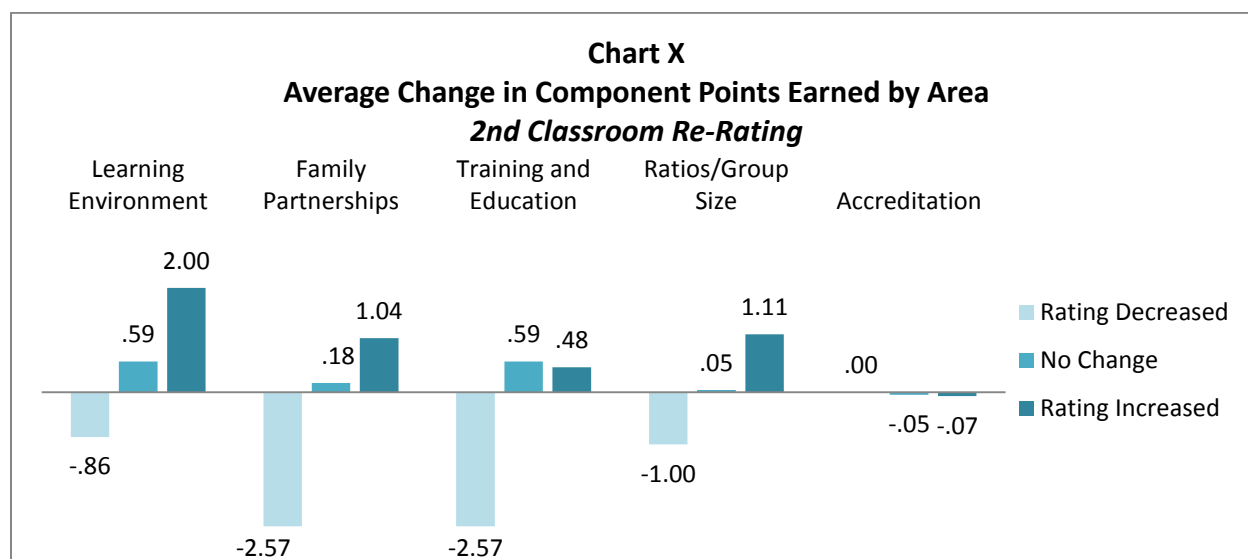


When looking at classrooms that had been re-rated twice, 67 percent increased their rating by at least one point; 28 percent increased five points or more. Twenty-eight percent lost one or more points when re-rated the second time, and again, less than ten percent lost five points or more.

Taking a step further, differences in points earned can also be looked at by 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) program accreditation. Chart IX and X show 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 each classroom's first re-rating, the classrooms that had their rating increase gained more than one point on average in the areas of learning environment (1.82 point gain on average), family partnerships (1.49 point gain), and training and education (1.33 point gain). Conversely, classrooms that had their rating decreased lost the majority of points on average in the area of family partnerships (2.86 points lost on average), followed by a -.91 point loss on average in learning environment scores.



When looking at classrooms that had been re-rated twice, the areas where classrooms gained or lost points varied. For classrooms that had their rating increase, on average they gained two points for learning environment and just over a point on average in the areas of family partnerships and ratio/group size. For classrooms that had their rating decrease, on average 2.57 points were lost in the areas of family partnerships and training and education, and one point was lost for ratio/group size.

## Conclusion

Overall, the improvement in the quality of classrooms who participate in the Denver Preschool Program continues to be positive over the past four years, and results are highly consistent when comparing sites that have been re-rated once versus re-rated twice. Over 90 percent of classrooms carry at least a three-star rating. There was, however, what appears to be an increase in the number of classrooms that had their rating decrease in the last two years (up to 16 percent) and it is the highest rated classrooms that continue to be most frequently re-rated at a lower level. These changes should be monitored in coming years.

## Appendix H: Memo from APA to DPP RE: 2008-09 Cohort TCAP Results



### MEMORANDUM

To: Jennifer Landrum, President, Denver Preschool Program  
From: Robert Palaich, DPP Evaluation Team Leader, Augenblick, Palaich and Associates<sup>8</sup>  
Date: July 10, 2013  
Re: DPP 2008-2009 Cohort TCAP Results

#### Introduction

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The 2012-2013 school year is a particularly exciting year for the Denver Preschool Program (DPP) as it is the first year that a sizeable number of DPP students participated in Colorado's standardized testing system, the Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP). School year 2008-2009 was the first year of full operation of DPP, with about 4,755 children enrolled. During the 2008-09 school year, from parent surveys and focus groups, we know that the DPP program did not have clear name recognition in all segments of the community. Further, DPP efforts to improve provider quality were just getting underway.

*This memo describes the evidence that suggests DPP children have contributed significantly to the growth in percent "advanced" or "proficient" on the TCAP reading assessment that DPS experienced.*

#### The Denver Preschool Program

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The Denver Preschool Program (DPP) is a taxpayer-funded initiative aimed at increasing access to high-quality preschool for all of Denver's children. DPP was created to encourage the families of children 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 between \$10 and \$11 million annually. 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.

*DPP operates on the premise that preschool plays an important role in the academic and socio-emotional development of children and that participating in a high-quality preschool experience, even for only one year, can have a positive impact on a child.*

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<sup>8</sup> The APA part of the evaluation team includes Kathryn Rooney, Nathan Roberson, and Simon Workman, as well as Drs. Palaich and Andrew Brodsky. The Clayton part of the evaluation team was led by Mary Maguire Klute, Ph.D., Buechner Institute for Governance, School of Public Affairs, University of Colorado, Denver and Caroline Ponce of the Clayton Early Learning Institute.

The program encourages families to enroll their children in high quality preschool by providing tuition credits to parents to offset the cost of preschool. The size of the tuition credit each family receives is determined by the family's income, the size of the family, and the quality rating of the preschool the child attends. In addition, DPP provides funding for preschools serving children who live in Denver to obtain a DPP quality rating. Participating programs also receive access to professional development opportunities (e.g., training and coaching) and quality improvement grants to assist them in their efforts to improve their quality.

The child outcomes portion of the DPP evaluation has focused on the following three questions over the life of the Program concerning the development of children enrolled in DPP during their preschool year and beyond.

- Do children make progress in their development while in DPP early childhood environments?
- To what extent are children enrolled in DPP ready for kindergarten?
- Do children from different income levels and with different primary languages make similar progress in their development while in DPP early childhood environments?

In the balance of this memo, we will focus on documenting the differences between DPP and non-DPP students in reading performance in grades kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

### Sample of 200 from the 2008-09 Cohort was Ready for Kindergarten

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During the 2008-09 school year, the evaluation team carried out the evaluation for a sample of children that was representative of the population of children enrolled in DPP at that time. These children were assessed in the fall and spring of their preschool year.<sup>9</sup> The following standardized assessments were used.

- Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-4 (PPVT: Dunn & Dunn, 2007) and Test de Vocabulario en Imágenes Peabody (TVIP: Dunn, Lugo, Padilla & Dunn, 1986). We used the PPVT and TVIP, which are widely used measures of receptive vocabulary in English and Spanish, respectively.
- Woodcock-Johnson III Achievement Battery (WJ; Woodcock, McGrew, & Mather, 2001) & Bateria III Woodcock-Muñoz (WM; Muñoz-Sandoval, Woodcock, McGrew & Mather, 2005). We used two subtests of the WJ: Letter-Word Identification (LWI; an assessment of pre-literacy and literacy skills) and Applied Problems (a math assessment). The WJ has a parallel Spanish version, WM, and these two subtests have strong reliability for preschool aged children.
- The parent and teacher surveys consisted of a measure of children's social-emotional development called the Devereaux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA: LeBuffe & Naglieri, 1999).

The analysis followed two steps.

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<sup>9</sup> For more information about this sample and results from the preschool year, readers are referred to the Annual Evaluation Report. Klute, M. M. (2009). *Denver Preschool Program: Report on Child Outcomes—2008-09 School Year*. Unpublished Report. Denver: Clayton Early Learning Institute.

- First, the 207 children that participated in the evaluation study during the 2008-09 school year were compared with 4,675 children enrolled in DPP but not included in the sample to check the representativeness of the sample. Statistical tests for differences in child gender, ethnicity, family income, Qualistar rating of the child's preschool, home language, and child's primary language were all non-significant.<sup>10</sup>
- Second, the results of all administered assessments were compared. *Results of the analysis for the sample suggest that the vast majority of children were ready for school, both academically and socio-emotionally.* When considering both languages of assessment, the evaluation team concluded that few children had scores in the risk range (below 85) on assessments of their vocabulary, literacy and math skills. These standardized assessments are scaled such that 84% of the general population would be expected to score above the at-risk range (a score of 85 or above). Scores for literacy and math in this sample clearly exceed that threshold. Vocabulary scores in this sample approach that threshold. When both languages of assessment were considered, more children than would be expected (i.e., more than half) met this more stringent criterion: more than half for vocabulary and nearly four-fifths for literacy and math. When teachers rated children's behaviors, their ratings of protective factors were high for most children. Protective factors, i.e., initiative, self-control and attachment, were rated as an area of concern for fewer than 10% of children.

### Sample of 200 From the 2008-09 Cohort Made Progress in Reading

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#### Kindergarten Reading in Spring of 2009-10

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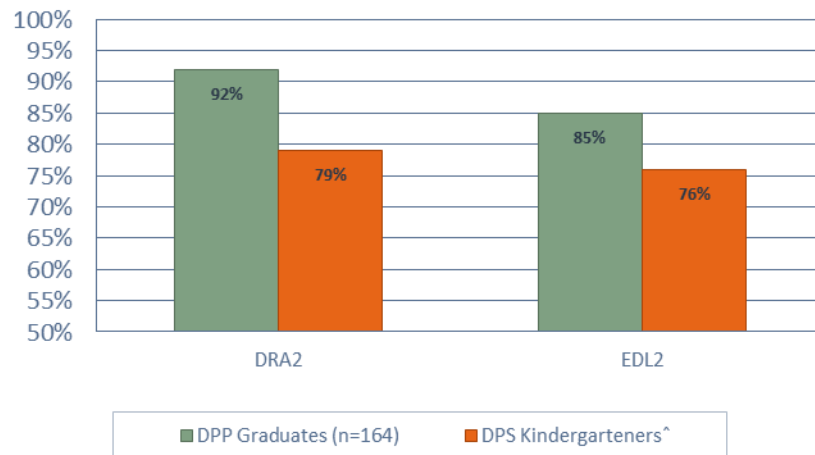
To obtaining reading assessment data from DPS, the evaluation team needed to obtain DPS identifiers from ACS, the agency that handles enrollment of families into DPP. The team was able to obtain reading assessment data one year after the DPP experience for over 80% of the 2008-09 cohort sample.

Figure 1 displays the proportion of the 2008-09 Cohort of DPP graduates whose reading level was at or above grade level as assessed by the DRA2 and EDL2. This is presented alongside the reading levels for kindergarteners in the district as a whole in spring 2010. The vast majority (92 percent) of DPP graduates assessed in English with the DRA2 were reading at or above grade level at the end of kindergarten. In contrast, in the district as a whole, just fewer than 80 percent of children were reading at or above grade level. Eighty-five percent of DPP graduates assessed in Spanish using the EDL2 were reading at or above grade level at the end of kindergarten. In contrast, about three quarters of children in the district as a whole were reading at or above grade level as assessed by the EDL2.

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<sup>10</sup> Gender:  $\chi^2_1=.21$ , n.s.; ethnicity:  $\chi^2_7=9.51$ , n.s.; family income:  $E(1,4263)=.48$ , n.s.; Qualistar rating:  $\chi^2_4=.58$ , n.s.; home language:  $\chi^2_1=.03$ , n.s.; child primary language:  $\chi^2_1=.80$ , n.s.

**Figure 1: Proportion of Children Reading On Grade Level in the Spring of Kindergarten Year, Cohort 1 DPP Graduates and All Kindergarteners Enrolled in DPS, Spring 2010**



\*The group of DPP Graduates includes 130 children assessed with the DRA2 and 34 assessed with the EDL2.

^The group of DPS Kindergarteners includes the DPP graduates.

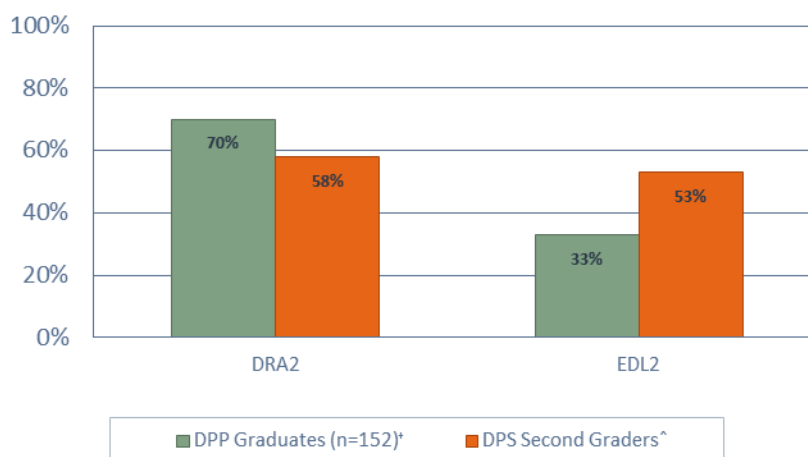
## 2nd Grade Reading Results in Spring of 2010-11

The 2008-09 cohort sample in the spring of 2011 reading assessment data were similar to the district in terms of their ethnic and gender composition. A smaller proportion of children in this sample qualified for free and reduced lunch than for the district as a whole, suggesting that this sample might be composed of slightly wealthier families.

Figure 2 displays the proportion of 2008-09 DPP cohort sample graduates whose reading level was at or above grade level as assessed by the DRA2 and EDL2. This is presented alongside the reading levels for second graders in the district as a whole in spring 2012. Over two-thirds of DPP graduates assessed in English with the DRA2 were reading at or above grade level at the end of second grade, compared with just 58% of second graders in the district as a whole. Only 15 DPP graduates were assessed using the EDL2. Of these 15, only a third were reading on grade level compared to slightly over half of the second graders assessed with EDL2 in the district as a whole.



**Figure 2: Proportion of Children Reading On Grade Level in the Spring of the Second Grade Year, Cohort 1 DPP Graduates and All Second Graders Enrolled in DPS, Spring 2012\***



\*A score of 28 is considered reading "on grade level" for the end of second grade.

^The group of DPP Graduates includes 137 children assessed with the DRA2 and 15 assessed with the EDL2.

^The group of DPS second graders includes the DPP graduates.

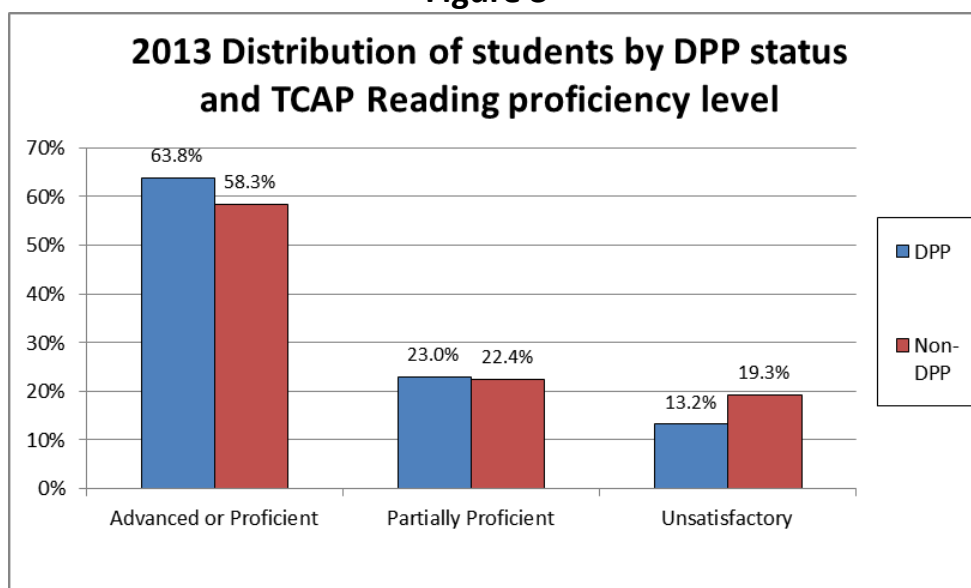
### *Results for all DPS Students Enrolled in 3rd Grade Who Took the TCAP*

In 2012-13, Denver Public Schools (DPS) experienced success in raising the number of students scoring proficient or above on the state's annual assessment in reading called the TCAP. DPS saw an overall 1.5% increase over the previous school year in the percent of students scoring proficient or above. This increase brings the percent of students scoring advanced or proficient district-wide to 61%. While 61% remains below the state average of 73%, the district continues to build on several years of increasing the percent of students reaching advanced or proficient on the reading portion of the assessment.

In 2012-13, 6,606 DPS students in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade took the TCAP assessment in DPS. Of those, 6,084 students took the assessment in English and 522 took the assessment in Spanish (known as "Lectura"). Among the DPS students taking the TCAP, 3,085 of these students had DPP experience while the remaining 3,521 did not participate in DPP.<sup>11</sup> Of the 4,755 children that participated in DPP in 2008-09, 3,098 took the TCAP in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade in 2012-13. (For comparisons between the entire cohort that participated in DPP in 2008-09 and the DPP students who took the TCAP in 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade in 2012-13, please see Appendix A in this memo. Selected other characteristics of DPP students who took the TCAP in 2012-13 are provided in Appendix B of this memo.)

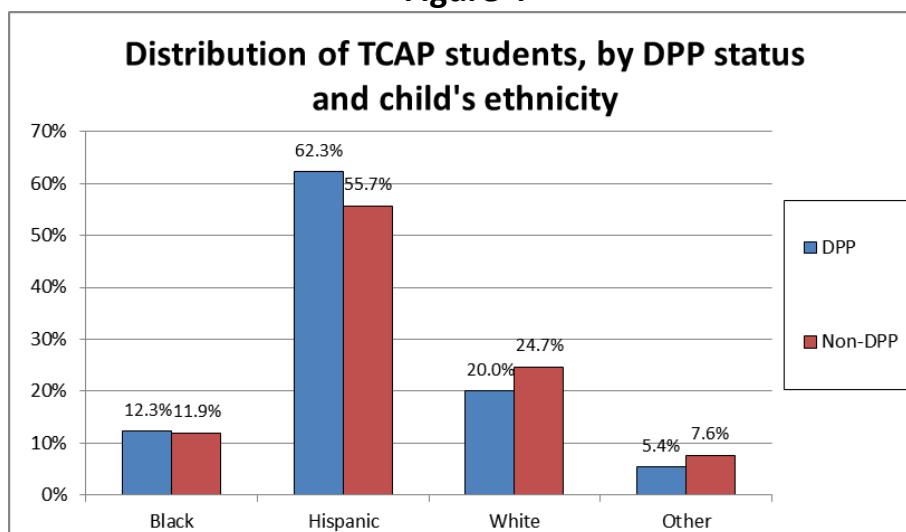
Figure 3 shows the proficiency distribution for the English version of the TCAP reading assessment. Compared to non-DPP students, DPP students were more likely (by 5.5%) to reach advanced or proficient levels and less likely (by 6.1%) to score at unsatisfactory levels.

<sup>11</sup> This does not mean, however, that the non-DPP students did not attend preschool; it only means that their families did not enroll in DPP. It is possible that a non-DPP student attended the same preschool as a DPP child, but did not enroll in DPP, and therefore, did not receive a DPP tuition credit.

**Figure 3**

### *Comparing the Demographics of DPP and Non-DPP Students*

To place the TCAP results for DPP students in context, the evaluation team examined the question: are the demographics of the students who participated in DPP different than those who did not participate? In general, the cohort of DPP students who took the TCAP in 2012-13 (3,098) is not noticeably different from those who did not participate in DPP (3,511). DPP tended to serve a higher proportion of those students who are typically considered to be *at-risk* of not being successful in school as is shown by the figures that follow. Figure 4 shows that DPP served a greater proportion of non-white students compared to non-DPP students who took the TCAP.

**Figure 4**

But Figure 5 shows that DPP students in every race/ethnicity category outperformed their non-DPP counterparts.

**Figure 5**

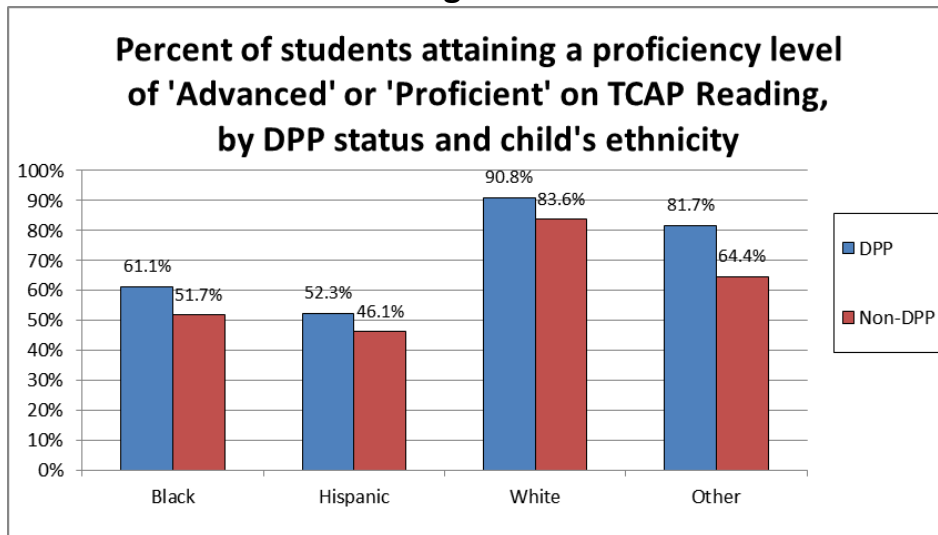


Figure 6 shows that the students who participated in DPP had a slightly higher proportion of free and reduced price lunch (FRPL) students than those who did not.

**Figure 6**

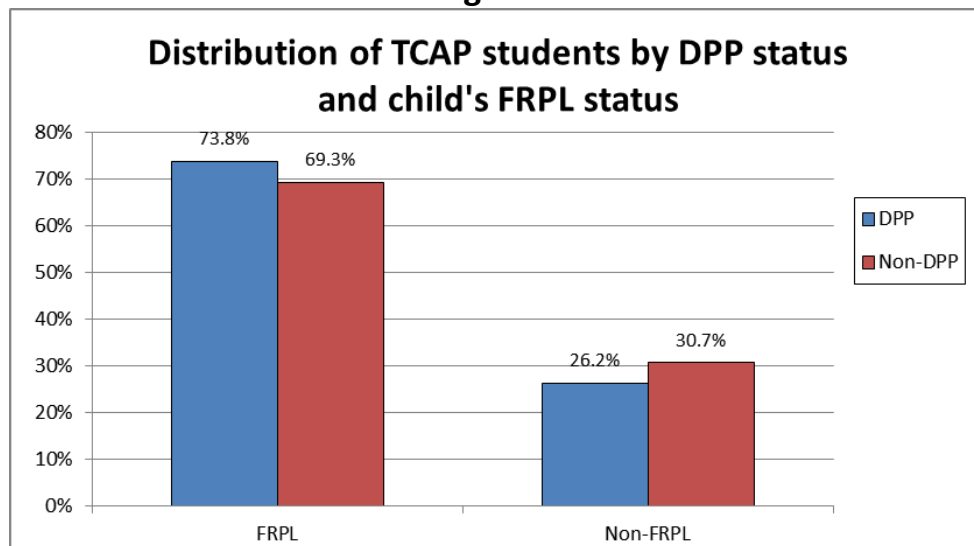


Figure 7 presents the related TCAP performance data. This result shows that DPP students who qualified for FRPL were 9.3% more likely to attain proficiency (or higher) than their non-DPP counterparts.

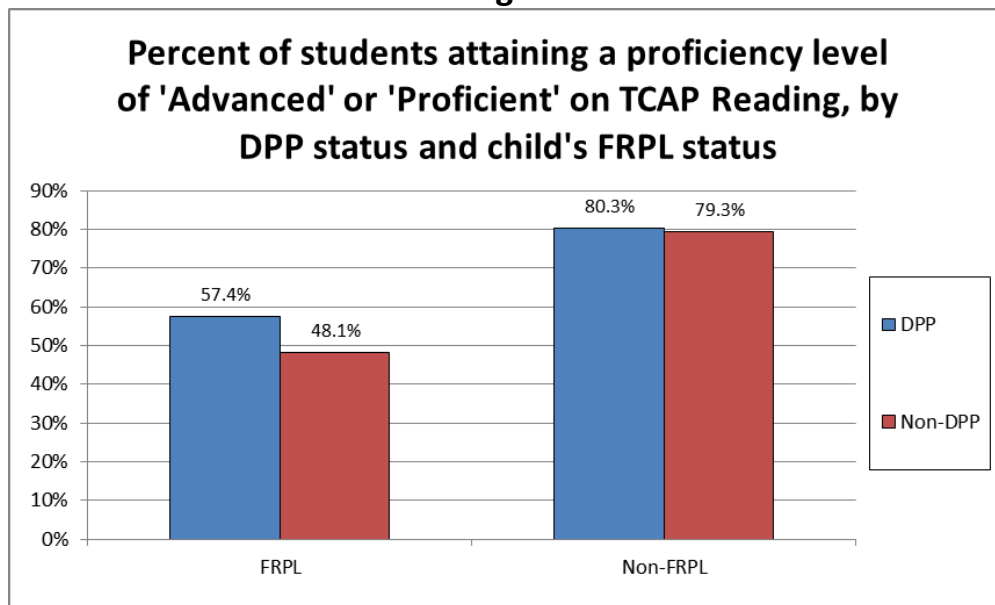
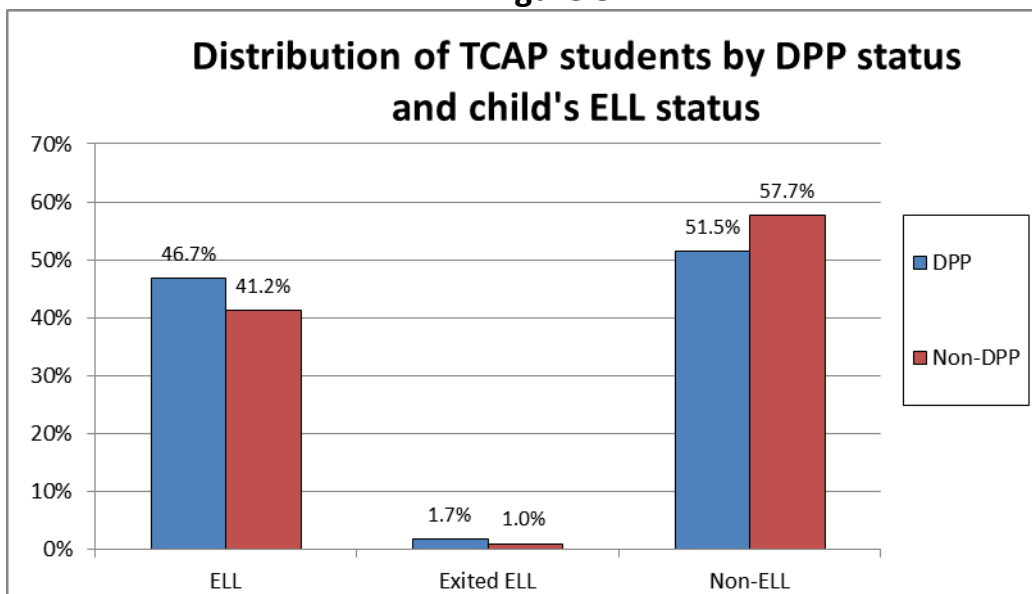
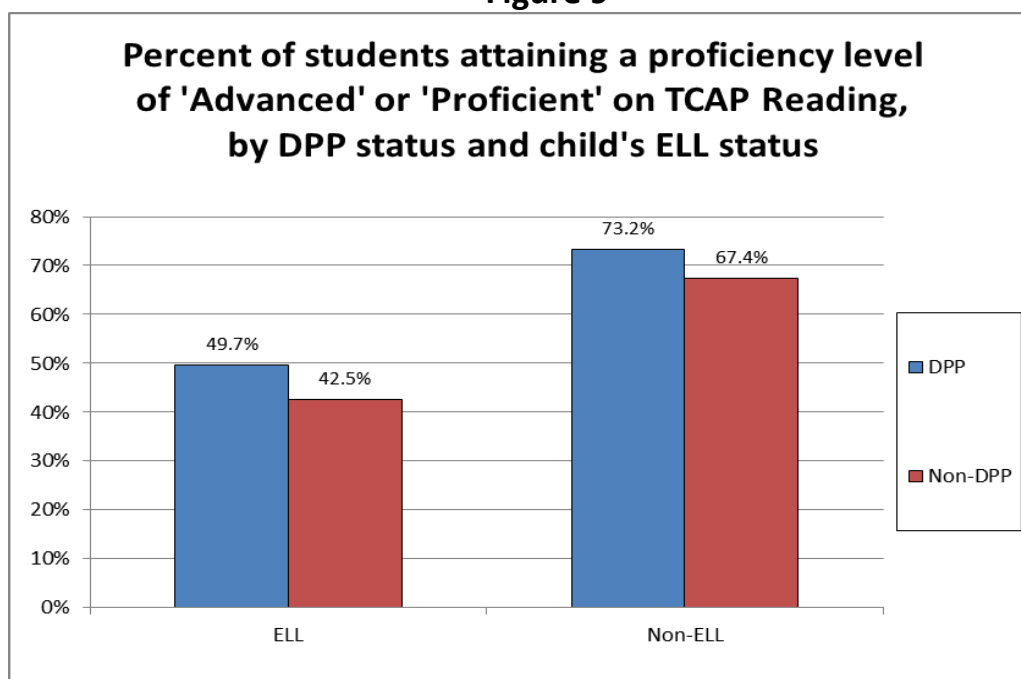
**Figure 7**

Figure 8 shows the DPP sample also had a larger proportion of students identified as English Language Learners (ELL), again indicating that the DPP sample could be considered to be a slightly more challenging group of students than the non-DPP sample.

**Figure 8**

Similar to findings reported above, Figure 9 shows that DPP students identified as ELL were 7.2% more likely to attain proficient or advanced levels on the TCAP.

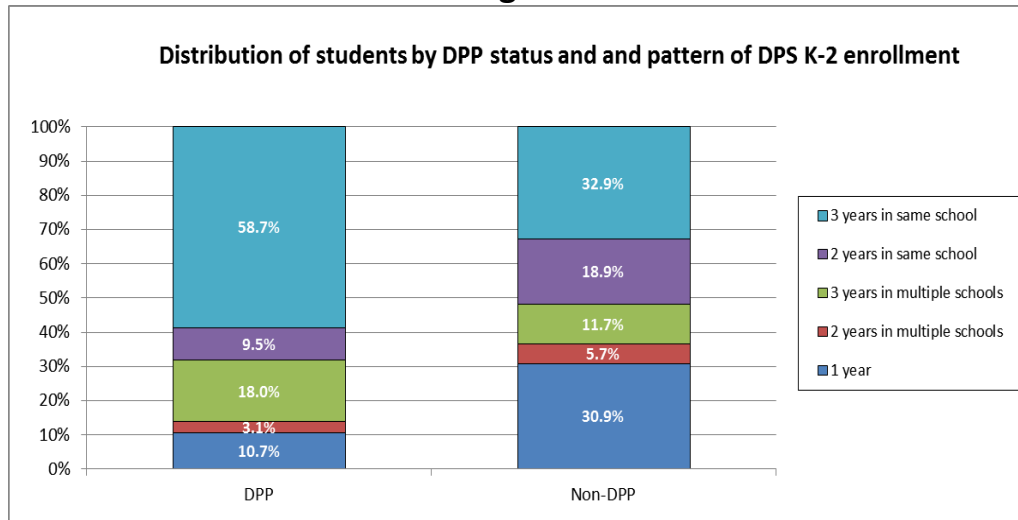
**Figure 9**

This series of charts suggest that although DPP students were a population that could face more educational challenges than the non-DPP population among those that took the TCAP in 2012-13, they managed to outperform their non-DPP counterparts on the TCAP assessment. (See other important demographics of the DPP population in Appendix A, Figures A1 and A2)

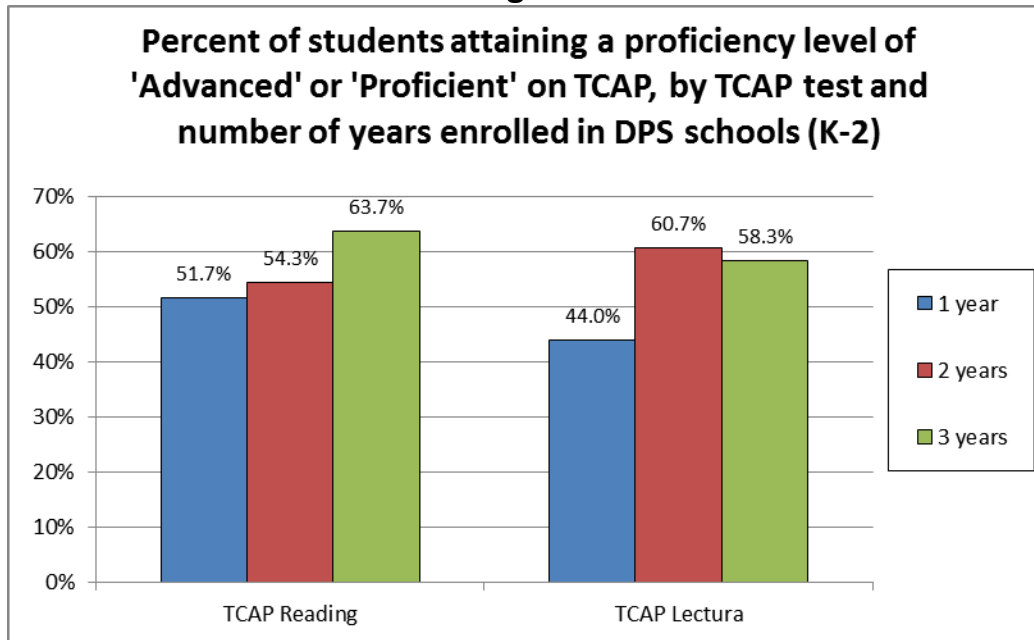
### *Advantages of DPP Students*

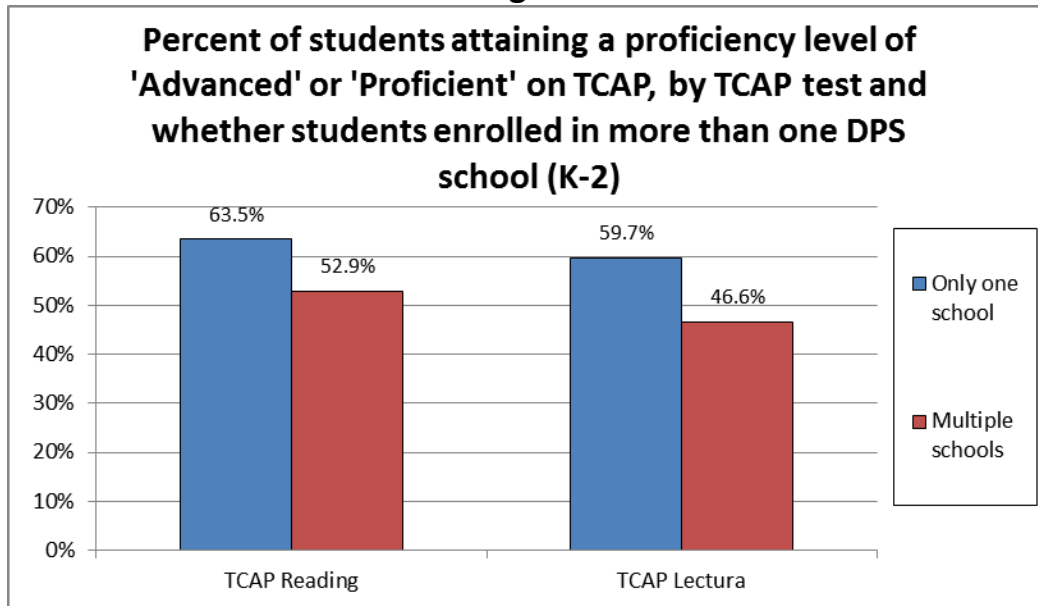
Despite the more challenging demographic characteristics of DPP students, DPP students have the advantage of several positive enrollment patterns that could contribute to their TCAP reading scores. For example, DPP students are more likely to spend kindergarten, first, and second grade in DPS schools as Figure 10 shows enrollment patterns by DPP status. It indicates that DPP students are much more likely to have enrolled for three years in the same school (kindergarten, first, and second grade) than non-DPP students and much less likely to have enrolled for only one year in the district. Such stability is related student academic performance.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Russell W. Rumberger and Katherine A. Larson, "Student Mobility and the Increased Risk of High School Dropout," *American Journal of Education* (1998): 1–35. Tucker, C. J., Marx, J., & Long, L. (1998). "Moving on": Residential mobility and children's school lives. *Sociology of Education*, 71(2), 111-129. EJ 568 057. Rumberger, R. W., Larson, K. A., Ream, R. K., & Palardy, G. J. (1999). *The educational consequences of mobility for California students and schools*. Berkeley, CA: Policy Analysis for California Education. ED 441 040. Skandera, H. & Sousa, R., *Mobility and the Achievement Gap*, Hoover Digest, 2002, No.3.

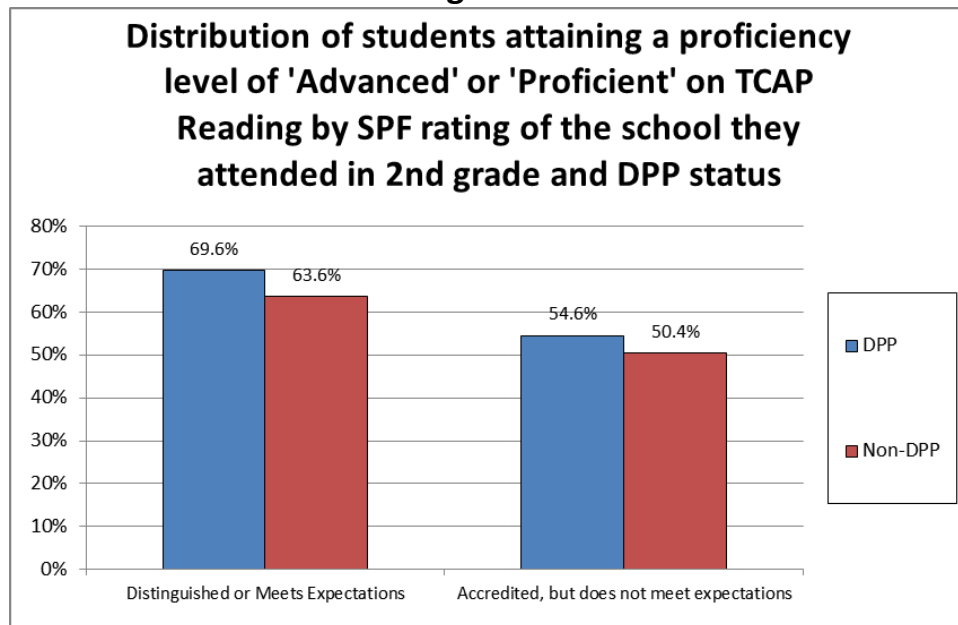
**Figure 10**

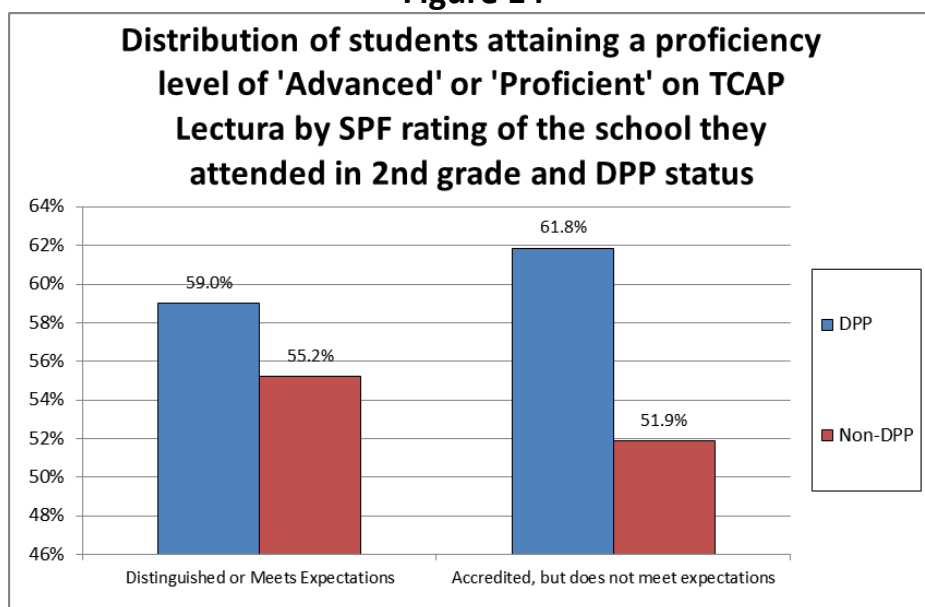
For the entire TCAP-taking population in DPS, Figures 11 and 12 suggest that longer enrollment in DPS and / or enrollment within a single school is positively associated with proficient and advanced performance on the TCAP reading assessments. (See Appendix C of this memo for differences in scores on the DRA and EDL interim assessments between the DPP and non-DPP students.)

**Figure 11**

**Figure 12**

Figures 13 and 14 present TCAP reading and Lectura performance by DPP status and DPS School Performance Framework (SPF) rating, which show a positive association between school rating and student TCAP scores.

**Figure 13**

**Figure 14**

## Conclusion

A quality preschool experience coupled with the quality of the school(s) students attend, makes a difference. Previous early childhood education research indicates that a quality preschool experience coupled with an effective elementary school can make a large positive difference in the academic performance of a child.<sup>13</sup> By combining TCAP results, DPP status indicators and the School Performance Framework (SPF) from DPS, the following conclusions can be drawn.

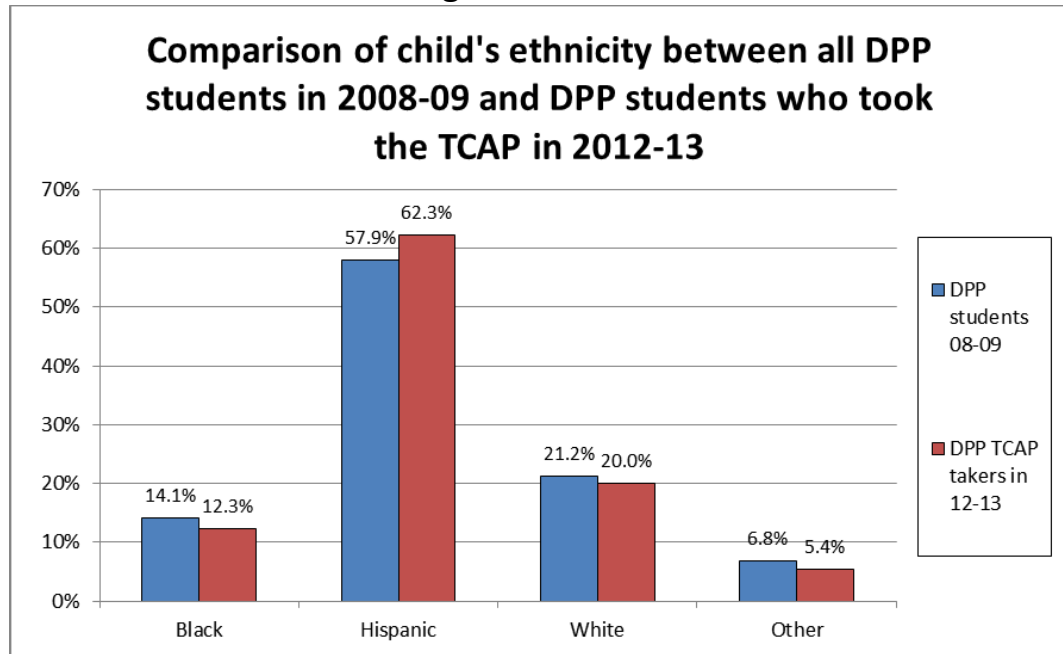
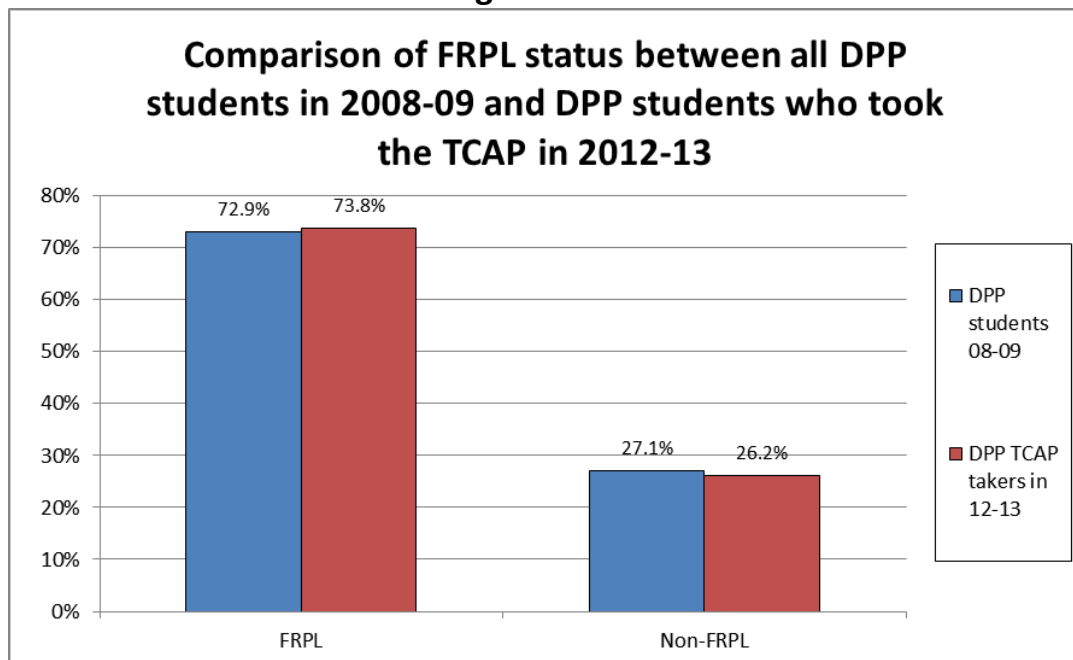
*Though the positive influence of a quality DPP supported preschool experience remains intact across the different levels of SPF rating (especially for those students taking the TCAP Lectura), a quality DPP experience coupled with higher school SPF ratings are associated with even greater percentages of students attaining advanced or proficient on TCAP.*

<sup>13</sup> Schweinhart, L.J., Montie, J., Xiang, Z., Barnett, W.S., Belfield, C.R., Nores, M. (2004). Lifetime Effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40. Ypsilanti High/Scope Foundation. Rolnick, A. and R. Grunewald (2003). Early childhood development: Economic development with a high public return. Technical report, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, Minneapolis, MN. Karoly, L. Kilburn, M. & Cannon, J. (2005). Early childhood interventions: Proven results, future promise. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Available online at [http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND\\_MG341.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND_MG341.pdf).



*TCAP Memo: Appendix A*

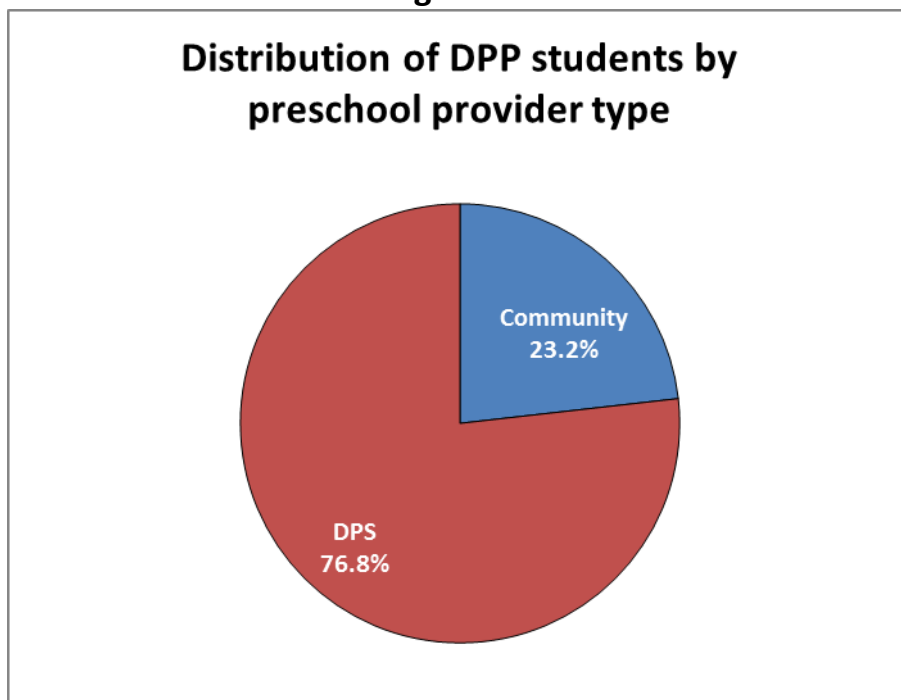
A comparison of all DPP students who participated in the program in 2008-09 with the DPP students who took the TCAP in 2012-13, by ethnicity and by FRPL status.

**Figure A1****Figure A2**

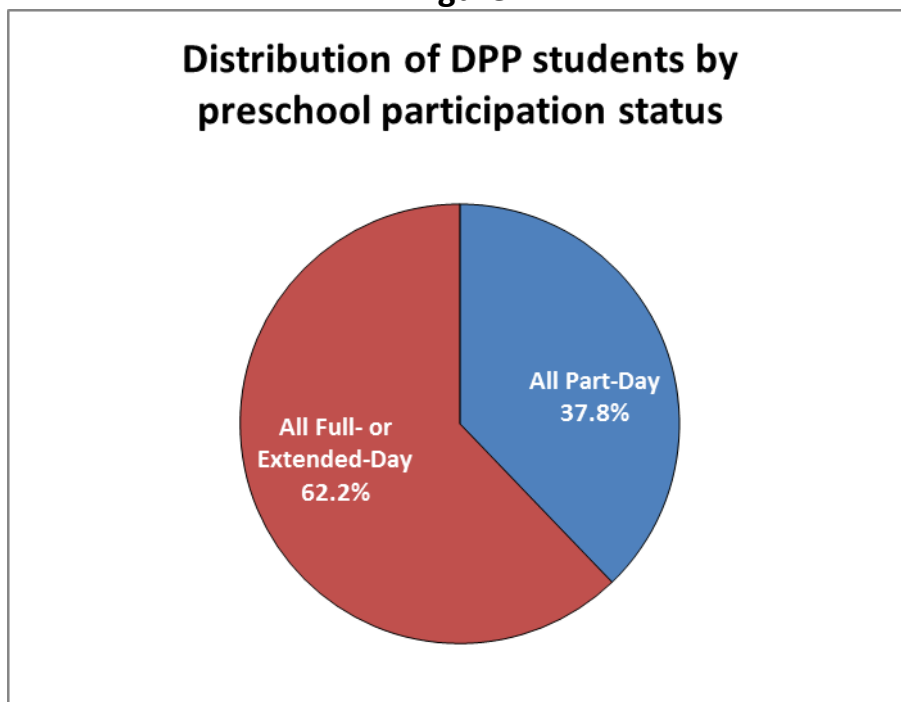
*TCAP Memo: Appendix B*

Characteristics of DPP participants in 2008-09 who took the TCAP in 2012-13

**Figure B1**

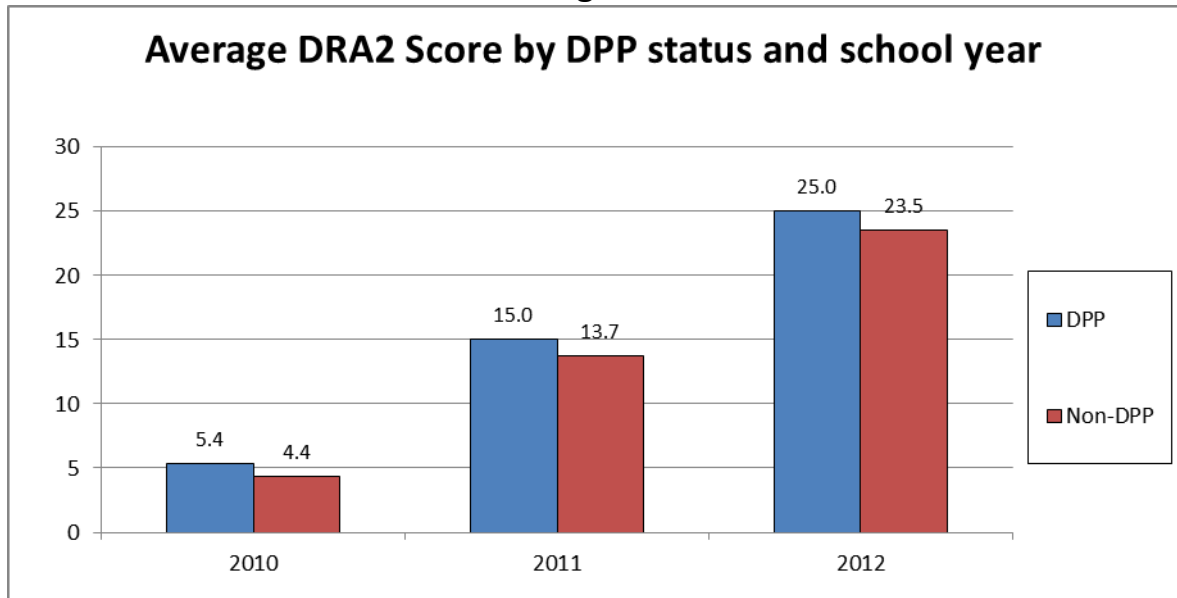
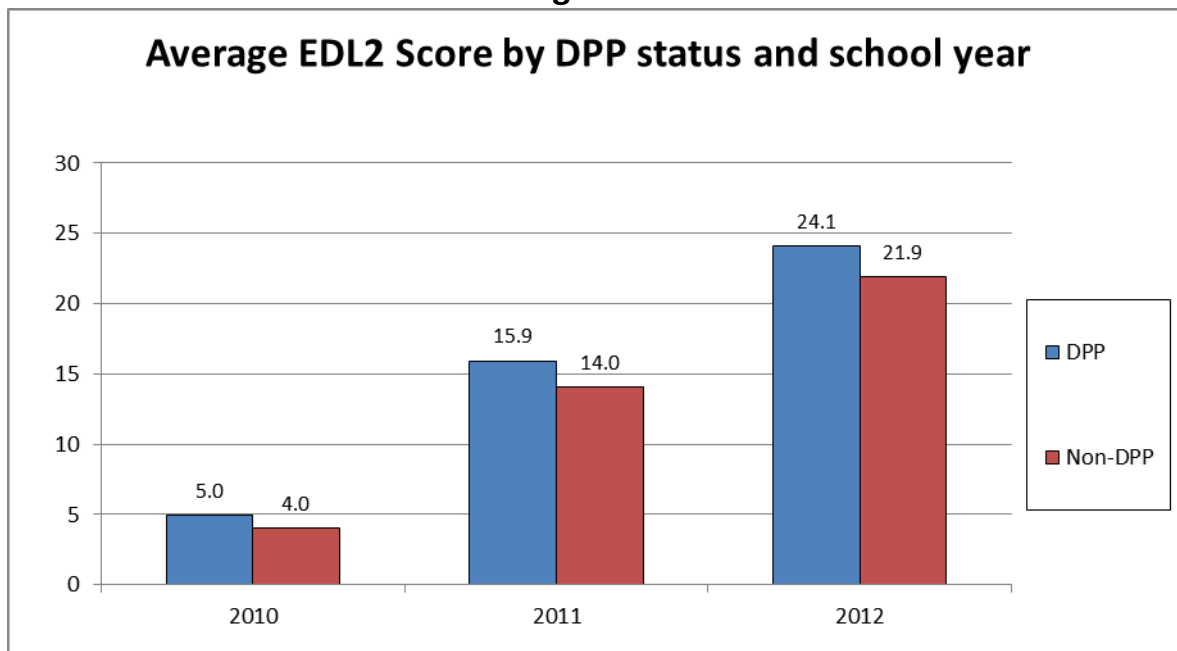


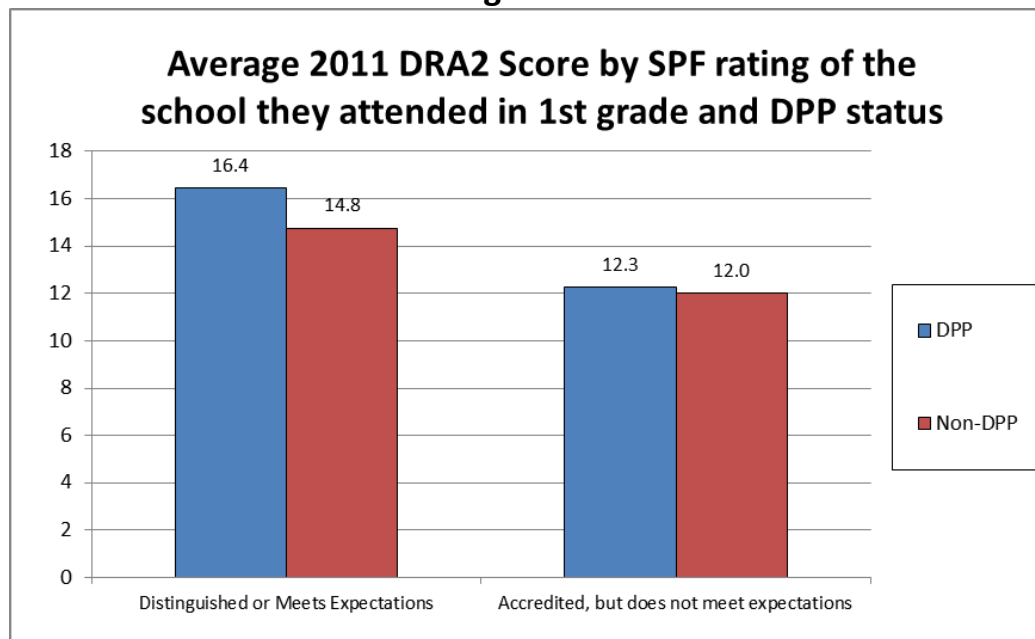
**Figure B2**



*TCAP Memo: Appendix C*

All DPS students -09 who took the TCAP in 2012-13, DRA and EDL average scores in the years preceding Third Grade, by DPP participation.

**Figure C1****Figure C2**

**Figure C3**

## Appendix I: Report of Provider Quality Improvement Interviews

### Preschool Quality in the Denver Area as Seen by DPP Providers

#### The Context

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The operations evaluation of the Denver Preschool Program has asked questions of the provider community since the first year of the program in 2007-08. These questions were developed to answer the original evaluation questions posed by DPP and had a focus on the start-up interactions between providers and the maturing Denver Preschool Program.

The original evaluation questions to which provider answers were sought included the following.

- Did the quantity of quality-rated programs increase as a result of the program?
- Did the quality improvement process, including grants given by DPP for preschool providers, help improve program quality?
- Does a year of quality preschool have similar impacts across income levels and/or languages?
- Are parents informed about DPP's existence and about how to apply for the tuition credits?
- Does the system deliver information and payments in a timely manner?
- Does the system have an acceptable error rate in terms of family application, student attendance and aid distribution?
- Do providers and DPP understand the impact other funding streams have on DPP participation?

In the original interviews and focus groups, the focus of the provider questions were on the ease of working with DPP in the operation of the program. Since 2008-09, these questions have been consistently asked of DPP participating providers (with small modifications to the questionnaire for Denver Public School (DPS) ECE providers since DPS sites do not directly handle the money distributed by DPP to the School District).

As the years have progressed, the questions that DPP has had of its providers have evolved. During the February through May period of 2013, the DPP evaluation subcommittee discussed new directions in the evaluation questions for providers. These discussions yielded some significant changes. In particular, a focus on preschool quality and a focus on knowledge of DPP were added to the set of things the evaluation subcommittee wanted to know more about. The evaluation subcommittee as well as DPP staff approved the resulting list of research questions.

1. How do Parents and Providers describe their interactions with DPP, its partners, and providers? Regarding Tuition Credits? Regarding Quality improvement?
  - a. Does the DPP application system make it easy for families and providers to participate?
  - b. Does the system work effectively across family income levels and/or the language spoken by the parent?
2. Does the availability of the preschool tuition credits geared toward higher quality programs encourage families to enroll in higher quality programs?
  - a. Do tuition credits encourage parents to choose high quality preschools?
  - b. Is family behavior in this area influenced by income level or the language spoken at home by the parent?
3. Have DPP efforts changed the quality of preschool programs?

- a. Did the number of rated and/or accredited programs change as a result of the DPP QI program?
  - b. Did the quality of participating programs increase as a result of DPP?
4. What DPP efforts were most effective in changing the quality of preschool programs? In what circumstances?
5. What do families know about DPP and how accurate is that knowledge?
  - a. Are parents informed about the existence of DPP and about how to apply for the tuition credits?
  - b. Are parents aware of the goals of DPP? Are parents aware that DPP is distinct from DPS?
  - c. Does this knowledge vary by income level or language spoken at home?

### The Questions and the Interviews

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In follow-up discussions with DPP staff, it was decided that during the 2012-13 school year the evaluation team would devote resources to have conversations with providers. Those conversations would explore their perception of what has influenced preschool quality at their particular preschool or set of preschools, and across preschool providers in the Denver community. The goal of these interviews and discussions was to suggest a new set of questions for the annual provider survey in 2013-14 that focused more directly on the evaluation questions approved by the DPP evaluation subcommittee focused on preschool quality.

The interview guide for selected providers covered the following topics. The entire interview protocol is provided at the end of this report.

1. Overall questions about quality at your particular site
  - a. Have you made any changes in your preschool? What? Why?
  - b. Is it easier to talk about/focus on quality today than it was 5 years ago?
  - c. Is the concept of quality clearer for you today than 5 years ago?
  - d. How do you feel about different ways of measuring preschool quality? Rating systems – Qualistar and CLASS? Other measures – staff qualifications and professional development courses?
2. How easy is it to talk with parents about quality?
3. How helpful are the following DPP elements of a system of support for quality? Tuition credits? Rating support? Professional development offerings? Coaching?
4. What aspect(s) of Quality Improvement do you feel is unsupported by DPP at present?

To answer these questions in the timeframe available, evaluation team staff arranged in-person interviews with six individuals representing five different providers participating in the Denver Preschool Program. Two providers represented large, multi-site preschool and early childhood education providers. Two providers represented single-site community centers, and one represented home childcare providers. Each interview lasted at least one hour and was conducted at a site convenient to the providers. Each site interviewed was given a \$50 gift card for participating in the interview. The interviews were conducted between April 15<sup>th</sup> and June 30<sup>th</sup> 2013. In addition, the evaluation team

participated in discussions with providers that examined the differences between the Qualistar and CLASS ratings systems, and the helpfulness of DPP-offered professional development opportunities.

## What We Learned

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### *Provider Size and Orientation*

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We learned that what providers think about the state of preschool quality and how DPP may have influenced it varies considerably. In addition, to a significant degree your perspective on these issues is influenced by where you “sit” as a provider. Where you “sit” is further divided into two dimensions. First is the size of the provider’s preschool operation, and second is into what circumstances the DPP quality improvement support must be integrated. Though this is not a new insight, the diversity across preschool providers is significant and that diversity is correlated with attitudes toward preschool quality and how the provider thinks about using DPP-provided quality improvement resources.

The following summaries illustrate these differences.

- The large, multi-site providers commented that DPP quality improvement resources needed to “fit into” their professional development plans. This meant that these providers had a professional development delivery and content structure in place, and it was through that structure that DPP resources would be shared.
- One of the single site community providers had much less of a delivery and content infrastructure in place than the multi-site organizations but still had to contend with integrating DPP quality improvement resources with other programs that support their center. This meant figuring out which of their classrooms had access to DPP resources and juggling which staff members had access to training.
- The second of the single site community providers was just at the point of developing a content infrastructure for their site and used the DPP coaching to develop that infrastructure. As the content infrastructure came into place, this center also had to figure out which of their classrooms had access to DPP resources and which staff members had access to training. Over time this infrastructure and training has been offered to all classrooms at the center.
- To the home provider, DPP quality improvement resources are a very significant part of their professional development. Not only are these resources available and affordable, but the thinking that has gone into them is viewed as a gift because that eliminates one item that the home provider does not need to worry about. The concern for the home provider was making the time to attend the training sessions.

The implications for changes in the provider survey going forward are twofold. First, it is important to use information collected on the total size as well as the number of classrooms operated by the providers when analyzing provider responses. Second, creating a few questions that map the provider orientation to integrating DPP quality improvement resources is also important.

### *Changes Affecting Preschool Quality*

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Several items were universally reported in our conversations.

- The environment rating scales were helpful in cleaning up a few sloppy practices for each provider.

- The re-rating process (and DPP paying for the re-rating process) was a critical element in upping the quality of the program. Knowing that the future ratings were on the horizon led to a commitment to more permanent rather than temporary solutions.
- Thinking about what the CLASS assessment measures felt authentic to the providers and staff members we talked with.
- Though it was clear that not everyone had thought about the question prior to being asked, all reported that the concept of preschool quality was in clearer focus today than it was 5 years ago. Though not universally reported, this clarity often led to a corollary statement indicating that quality was easier to talk about today than five years ago.

No matter what the specific reactions to the rating systems or other elements of preschool quality, DPP was acknowledged for having pushed the understanding of preschool quality in the metro area and as having supported it with actual resources!

When responding to the question concerning what changes affecting preschool quality happened at your particular site or set of sites, the responses ranged widely. At a minimum, everyone had a story concerning the rating and re-rating process. Most mentioned the coming use of CLASS as a positive enhancement to the discussion of quality at their site. Most mentioned the professional development classes in the DPP quality improvement system. Whether these elements were discussed in the context of a larger strategy for quality improvement depended entirely on the provider being interviewed. For a couple of providers the DPP contribution was being integrated into a larger process. But an equal number of providers said what DPP offered was the only quality improvement process they were adopting.

The implications for changes in the provider survey going forward are threefold. First, creating questions that map the provider orientation to integrating DPP quality improvement resources as mentioned above is critically important. Second, we need a set of questions that probe how the provider wants to use the DPP quality improvement investment in their particular context. Finally, it is then that we can see how specific DPP quality improvement resources fit into the individual provider context. For example, it is only in these situations that the offer of DPP coaching assistance is appropriate.

### *Talking with Parents about Preschool Quality*

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The responses to questions in this area were more complex than responses to other questions. In general, providers thought that parents were more interested in preschool quality than five years earlier but that interest has expanded. Quality in the minds of many parents reportedly starts with safety, facilities and location. It is often the duty of the provider to expand the quality concept for parents to include getting ready for school. Over the past several years, parents are beginning to bring questions about school readiness to the providers. This transition is an indicator that the concept of preschool quality and its relationship to school success is beginning to take hold in the general population and across all income groups.

Clearly defining preschool quality for parents, however, is a job that falls to the preschool provider, even more specifically the provider at the site which the parent visits. In our parent surveys, we have seen a reported increase in site visits and discussions with the ECE site leader as primary sources used by parents when making decisions about sending their child to a particular preschool. In our interviews,



every provider reported an increased need to discuss school readiness and the instructional side of preschool with their parents. Those interviewed reported an increased comfort in talking about preschool quality with parents. That said, even in the conversation we had with these providers, it is clear that there is quite a range in the definition and level of detail used by providers when discussing preschool quality. For example, some providers we interviewed emphasized the first steps in moving parents beyond safety and facilities to school readiness. Other providers focused on the details of school readiness and teacher interaction.

The implications for changes in the provider survey going forward in the area of talking with parents about quality are fourfold. First, this line of questions may be best asked of site ECE leaders rather than multi-site coordinators. Second, questions are needed that will help us understand in what aspect of quality providers think parents are interested. Third, but related to the second, it would be interesting to know what the parents said or did that triggered this response from the provider. Finally, it is important to know whether the parents or guardians are asking questions of the provider about preschool quality.

### *The DPP System of Support for Quality Preschool*

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The responses to questions in this area were more straightforward when compared to responses to other questions. In general, providers thought that DPP had several critical elements of quality in place. These include having a rating system, being clear that the rating system and periodic re-rating were both important and offering critical resources for materials and professional development. Each of these elements was important but in combination, they were critical. DPP also was acknowledged for the coaching it offers, for exploring the CLASS system, and for keeping interested providers up to date on where it was and where it was heading.

The job of defining the DPP system of support for preschool quality falls to DPP itself. The organization gets praise for its efforts to reach out to providers. It is, however, up to the providers to translate the DPP offerings into an action plan at the site level. There is significant variation among the providers we talked to in their capacity to translate these opportunities into action at their site.

The implications for changes in the provider survey going forward in the area of DPP support for preschool quality are essentially twofold. First, we may need a set of questions focused on how well the DPP message on this topic has been heard. For example, a related multiple choice question might be what role does coaching play in the DPP system of support for quality preschool? Second, a line of questions about how has the provider used the DPP elements of support to change the operation of their individual preschool?

### *What is not covered by DPP Quality Improvement?*

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The answers to these questions were surprisingly simple. All those interviewed indicated that they could not think of any other aspect of quality improvement that DPP should move into. All indicated that it was important for DPP to continue its outreach effort in the quality improvement area to all types of providers. Finally, those interviewed also indicated that not every provider is ready for the assistance DPP is prepared to offer the moment the provider is informed of the opportunity. It takes time for providers to get ready to change.

There are no implications for the provider survey from this set of interview responses.

## Complete Interview Protocol

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1. Overall questions about quality at your particular site
  - a. Have you made any changes affecting preschool quality in your preschool? What? Why?
  - b. Is it easier to talk about/focus on quality today than it was 5 years ago?
  - c. Is the concept of quality clearer for you today than 5 years ago?
  - d. How do you feel about different measures of quality?
    - i. Qualistar Ratings
      - (1) Learning Environment
      - (2) Family Partnerships
      - (3) Training and Education
      - (4) Adult-to-Child Ratios and Group Size
      - (5) Program Accreditation
    - ii. CLASS Rating
      - (1) Emotional Support
      - (2) Classroom Organization
      - (3) Instructional Support
    - iii. Staff qualifications
    - iv. Professional development course offerings
2. How easy is it to talk with parents about quality?
  - a. Does it feel like a push from provider to talk to parents about quality or do parents proactively ask about it?
  - b. Are you able to talk about quality with comfort and clarity?
  - c. Are parents in agreement with DPP definition of quality?
3. DPP System of support for quality
  - a. How helpful are the following DPP elements of a system of support for quality?
    - i. Tuition credits
    - ii. Rating support
    - iii. PD offerings
    - iv. Coaching
  - b. How does current system compare to previous systems?
    - i. Is it working? How could it be improved?
    - ii. If you received coaching support:
      - (1) Why did you decide you needed it?
      - (2) Why do you think others didn't opt for it?
4. What aspect of QI do you feel is unsupported by DPP at present? In what areas would you like additional support? Have you heard comments from other providers about why they chose not to participate in DPP Quality Improvement? Coaching? Professional Development?