



AUGENBLICK,
PALAICH AND
ASSOCIATES

An Evaluation of the Denver Preschool Program 2015-2016

Prepared for

The Denver Preschool Program

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Executive Summary

In 2006, voters approved the Denver Preschool Program (DPP) to encourage families to enroll their four-year-old children in quality preschool programs so that the children would be prepared to enter kindergarten ready to learn and to eventually increase the likelihood of their success in kindergarten and beyond. Since its first year of operation during the 2008 school year,¹ DPP has made significant progress toward these goals. In the 2016 school year, DPP achieved the following milestones:

- A total of 245 preschool sites were approved by DPP;
- A total of 5,322 children in the 2016 school year received approval for DPP tuition credits;
- Of the 245 sites, 192 have a DPP CDHS rating of 3, 4, or 5 stars, the three highest ratings.; and
- The vast majority of DPP students attended top rated classrooms. In 2016, 88 percent of DPP students attended a 3, 4, or 5 star classroom.

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

- **DPP continues to provide high-quality preschool to a majority of four-year-olds in Denver**, serving more than 5,300 children this year.
- DPP continues to have a **positive impact on preschool quality** in Denver. Seventy-eight percent of DPP sites are rated as 3, 4, or 5 star programs and providers continue to highly rate the quality improvement supports offered by the program, especially financial assistance with materials and equipment.
- Parents are focused on **teacher qualifications and positive teacher-child interactions** when selecting a preschool for their child. In determining a preschool's reputation of quality, parents are more likely to **rely on recommendations from people they know**, and on broader community perceptions, than on the Qualistar Rating™, Colorado Shines ratings, or national accreditation status.
- The **DPP tuition credit allows parents to work and/or attend school**, with 86 percent of all parents reporting that DPP allows them to work. Over 37 percent of parents report that DPP allows them to attend school. This impact was greatest for lower-income families and for families of black or Hispanic children.
- Parents continue to report that by enrolling their child in preschool they hope that they will **experience challenge or a broader range of activities, learn academic skills and concepts**, and develop the ability to **interact with other children**.
- **DPP operations continue to run smoothly**, with providers indicating very few operational or policy concerns. Further, providers report that tuition payments are received in a timely manner.

¹ For the purpose of presenting these 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; the 2012-13 school year is referred to as 2013; the 2013-14 school year is referred to as 2014; the 2014-15 school year is referred to as 2015; and the 2015-16 school year is referred to as 2016.



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I. Description of the Denver Preschool Program

In 2006, Denver voters approved a dedicated sales tax to fund the creation of the Denver Preschool Program (DPP). Since then, DPP has made high-quality preschool possible for more than 43,000 young children. Tuition support, available to all Denver families with a four-year-old regardless of income or neighborhood, is scaled to family income, the quality of the preschool selected, and participation level. Families with lower incomes who choose higher quality programs receive more tuition support. In November 2014, Denver voters approved a continuation of DPP through 2026 and increased the sales tax from 0.10 percent to 0.15 percent.

Since its beginning, DPP has invested in measuring and improving the quality of Denver's preschool programs, recognizing the importance of high-quality programs in giving children a solid start. DPP rates all classrooms for quality and funds quality improvement activities including coaching for teachers, professional development opportunities including college coursework, and classroom learning materials. Families can choose from 245 licensed, high-quality preschool options across the city. These include community-based centers, family child care homes, and Denver Public Schools classrooms.

Theory of Action

A robust body of evidence indicates high-quality preschool helps all children, but particularly those at risk for school failure, enter kindergarten with the skills needed to be successful learners.² When children are ready to learn in kindergarten, they are more likely to read on grade level by third grade, be able to make the transition to reading to learn in fourth grade, and graduate high school on time. DPP ensures every Denver four-year-old has access to high-quality preschool. DPP also works to continuously improve the quality of preschool programs in Denver. The underlying theory of action behind the program is summarized as follows:³

- Tuition credits offset preschool costs for families, making it more likely that children will participate in preschool and attend regularly;
- Students who attend high-quality preschools are more likely to develop the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in kindergarten and beyond; and
- Financial investments in provider quality coupled with financial incentives for families to enroll in higher quality preschools will improve the overall quality of Denver's preschool system.

² See, for example Yoshikawa, H. et al. (2013) *Investing in Our Future: The Evidence Base on Preschool Education*. Ann Arbor, MI: Society for Research in Child Development; New York: Foundation for Child Development. Available at: [http://fcd-us.org/sites/default/files/Evidence Base on Preschool Education FINAL.pdf](http://fcd-us.org/sites/default/files/Evidence%20Base%20on%20Preschool%20Education%20FINAL.pdf)

³ 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.



Program Design

DPP provides several types of support to encourage families to enroll their children in preschool and to encourage preschool providers to improve the quality of their services.

Tuition Credits

The DPP tuition credit is available to all Denver residents who enroll their child in a DPP preschool the year before kindergarten. The credit value is based on a sliding scale and is determined by the following factors:

1. The **quality level of the school**;
2. A family's **income level and size**; and
3. The child's participation level – **extended-time, full-time, or part-time**.

The largest credit goes to the lowest-income child attending the highest-quality school on an extended-time schedule.

To obtain the credit, a Denver family chooses a participating DPP preschool and submits an application to verify the residency and age per DPP requirements. Once the child is approved, DPP determines income and the participation level to calculate the full value of the credit. The preschool submits monthly attendance reports for the DPP children and the credit is paid directly to the provider to offset the family's tuition bill. DPP dollars are the "last dollars in" which means that DPP dollars can be combined with other funding but that a provider cannot receive more tuition than their listed rate.

Quality Rating and Improvement

To be designated a DPP preschool, a provider must be licensed and quality-rated 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.

The 2016-17 school year will be the first school year in which every DPP provider will receive a Colorado Shines ratings. Prior to the 2015-16 school year, preschools were rated using the Qualistar Rating™ system. During the 2015-16 school year, preschools received a DPP CDHS rating, which is either the Colorado Shines ratings (for preschools that had received a Colorado Shines rating) or a combination of the Qualistar rating™ and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) rating (for preschools that had not yet received a Colorado Shines rating).

DPP provides financial support to offset the cost of program and classroom rating. Additionally, DPP works with the providers to help improve their quality ratings through a quality improvement credit system. DPP provides preschools with an annual credit allowance based on need and those credits can be exchanged for professional development, coaching, or classroom materials. Providers are rerated on a regular basis.

Denver Preschool Program Organization and Staffing

DPP is a four-person 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Staff consists of a President and CEO; a Director of Operations; a Director of Quality Initiatives; and a Director of Outreach. A Board of Directors oversees DPP. With the exception of one City Council member, all Directors are appointed by the Mayor. DPP is required to provide annual status reports to the Denver Office of Children's Affairs, a Denver city agency, as well as to the City Council.



To achieve a number of operational and policy objectives, DPP subcontracts with the following organizations:

- **MetrixIQ** 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.
- **Qualistar Colorado** and the **Clayton Early Learning Institute** conduct quality assessments and assist DPP with implementation of its classroom rating system.
- **The Flahive Group** provides DPP with quality assurance support.
- The **Denver Early Childhood Council** coordinates DPP's quality improvement credits and oversees the annual provider MOU and renewal process.
- **Augenblick, Palaich and Associates (APA)** completes an annual evaluation of DPP, subcontracting with the **Clayton Early Learning Institute** to assess student progress.
- Other public relations consultants assist with advertising, program outreach, and other services.



II. Status of the Denver Preschool Program in 2016⁴

For the purpose of this report, school years are reported as the spring calendar year. Thus, the 2015-16 school year is reported as 2016 in this report.

Number of Children

The process for participating in DPP is as follows:

1. Families with children in the year before kindergarten **apply** to DPP for their child to attend preschool at a DPP approved site.
2. DPP must **approve** the child's participation in the program at an approved DPP preschool site.
3. Children who are approved can then **participate** in the program and the site is authorized to receive payment from DPP once the child starts attending.

These steps create three levels at which a child-count can be taken:

1. The number of children applying;
2. The number of children approved, and
3. The number of children who actually participate in the program and receive tuition credits.⁵

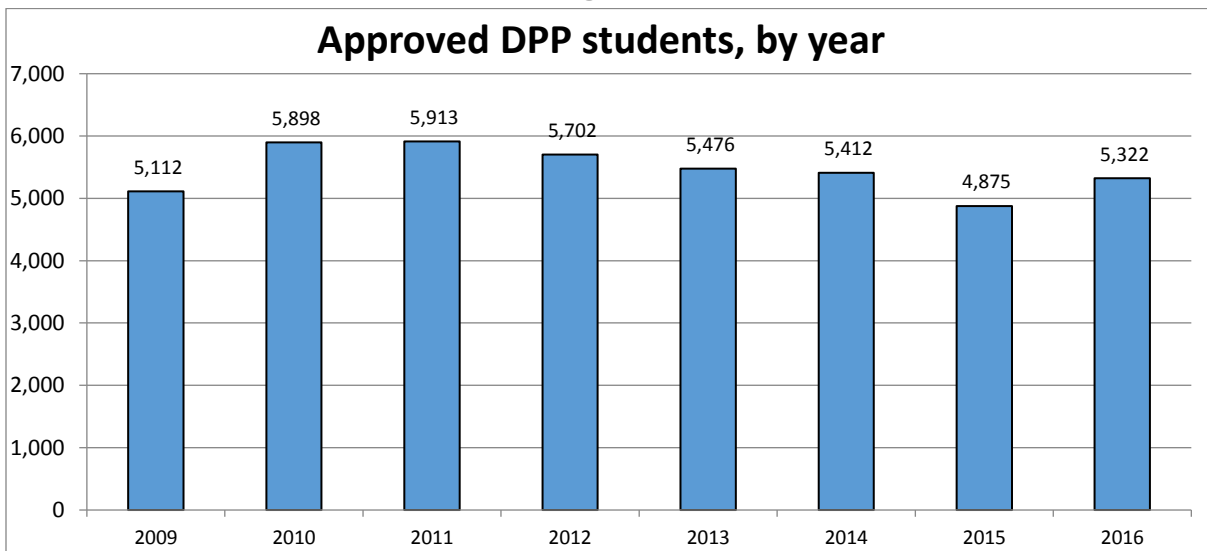
⁴ DPP continues to enroll students throughout the year. The parent and providers surveys were administered in January 2016 and rely on DPP enrollment numbers from November 2015. APA also utilizes data from the end of the 2016 school year to get a more complete picture of the year. Thus, because the data is extracted at different times of the year, the numbers may differ somewhat. This section reports end of the year numbers extracted on August 18, 2016.

⁵ In certain evaluation studies it is necessary to ensure that the students included in the study received a minimal dosage of a DPP approved preschool. Specifying a minimum number of months that the child attended would likely reduce the number of DPP preschoolers reported in the study.



The numbers in Figure 1 relate to how many children DPP approved, rather than the number that may have actually participated in a DPP-approved preschool program, in 2016 and for historical years. As shown in Figure 1, the number of children approved to receive the DPP tuition credit rebounded to a similar enrollment level as 2014 after a dip in 2015. DPP records indicate that 5,322 children were approved for school year 2016. The program recently engaged in a capacity study to refine the actual population of four-year-olds in Denver and evaluate what they do in their year before kindergarten, to further understand this population and how DPP can best serve them.

Figure 1



The total number of preschool providers has remained fairly constant over the years, with 245 providers in 2016. Seventy percent of DPP children received services at 88 Denver Public Schools (DPS) sites, while 27 percent received services from 148 center-based sites and less than one percent of DPP students received services at 9 participating home-based sites. A further three percent were enrolled in more than one type of site (DPS, community center, community home) during different times of the day or week.



Table 1 below shows the distribution of DPP-approved sites by numbers of children enrolled and provider type. Approximately 43 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.⁶

Table 1

2016. Distribution of Students Enrolled in DPP Sites, By Provider Type					
# of Children Enrolled	# of Sites				
	DPS	Community Center	Community Home	Total	% of total
1-9	0	97	9	106	43.3%
10-24	20	39	0	59	24.1%
25-49	42	10	0	52	21.2%
50-99	23	2	0	25	10.2%
100 or more	3	0	0	3	1.2%
Total	88	148	9	245	100%

This analysis is based on enrollment records, not provider records. 150 students were enrolled at multiple provider types. They are not included in this analysis. Students who attended multiple schools of the same type were however included in the enrollment totals at multiple schools. This includes 129 students attending 97 different schools.

Number and Quality of Sites

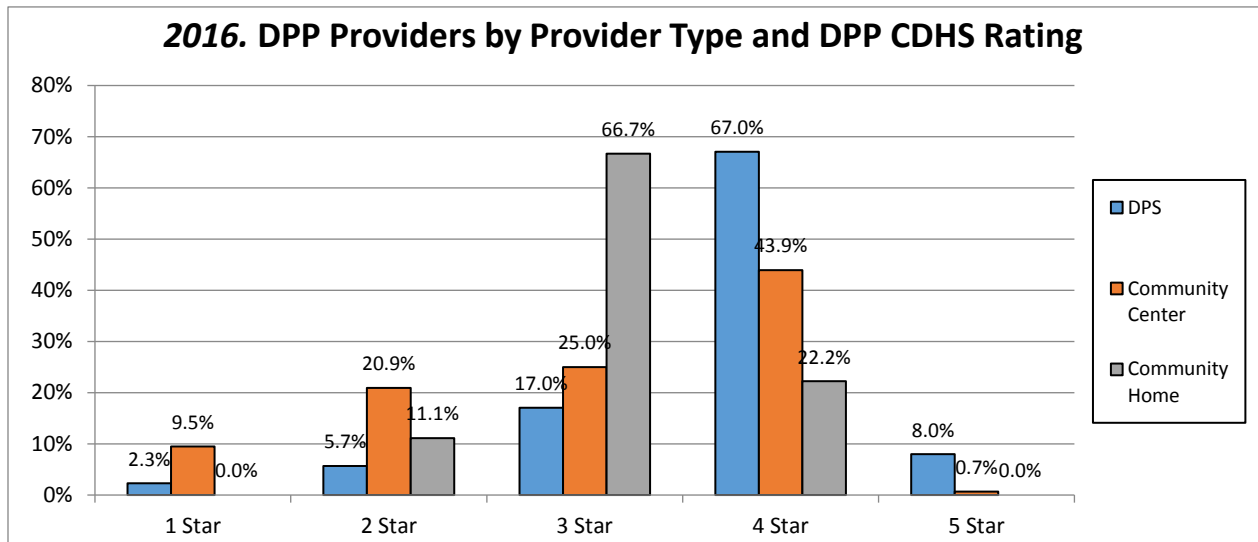
DPP was in the process of switching from Qualistar Ratings™ to Colorado Shines ratings in 2016. DPP currently is using the current ratings from Colorado Shines for each provider unless providers have not yet received a Colorado Shines rating, in which case providers receive a rating that combines the previous Qualistar™ and CLASS ratings. Across all sites, the ratings that are utilized in 2016 and in this analysis are called the DPP CDHS ratings.

⁶ 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.



More than 78 percent of DPP preschool sites were given a 3-, 4-, or 5-star DPP CDHS rating in 2016. Quality ratings varied by the type of preschool. Three quarters of DPS preschools, 75 percent, were rated 4 or 5 stars, while 45 percent of community center-based preschools and 22 percent of home-based preschools were rated 4 or 5 stars. The distribution of preschools by quality rating and provider type is shown below in Figure 2.

Figure 2



This includes only providers who were active and had at least one child enrolled in 2015-16.

In 2016, the vast majority of students (88 percent) in both community and DPS preschools were enrolled in a preschool rated 3 stars or higher as shown in Table 2. Ninety-two percent of students who attended DPS preschools and 83 percent of students who attended community center-based preschools were enrolled at 3-, 4- or 5-star-rated preschools in 2016. Eighty percent of the students enrolled in home-based preschools were enrolled in 3-, 4- or 5-star-rated preschools.

Table 2

2016. Percent of DPP Students by Provider Type and DPP CDHS Rating					
Star Rating	DPS	Community Center	Community Home	Both	Total
1 star	1.6%	5.4%	0.0%	0.7%	2.6%
2 stars	5.1%	10.5%	20.0%	2.7%	6.6%
3 stars	14.7%	22.0%	66.7%	0.7%	16.4%
4 stars	69.3%	57.8%	13.3%	39.3%	65.2%
5 stars	8.0%	3.4%	0.0%	0.0%	6.5%
Multiple Ratings	1.4%	0.8%	0.0%	56.7%	2.8%

For 2015-2016, there were 32 students who are missing records for both provider type and DPP CDHS rating. These students are excluded from these percentages.

An important indicator of DPP's success is the growing number of students enrolled in high-quality preschool programs. APA has historically tracked and reported on changes in rating over time. However, due to the

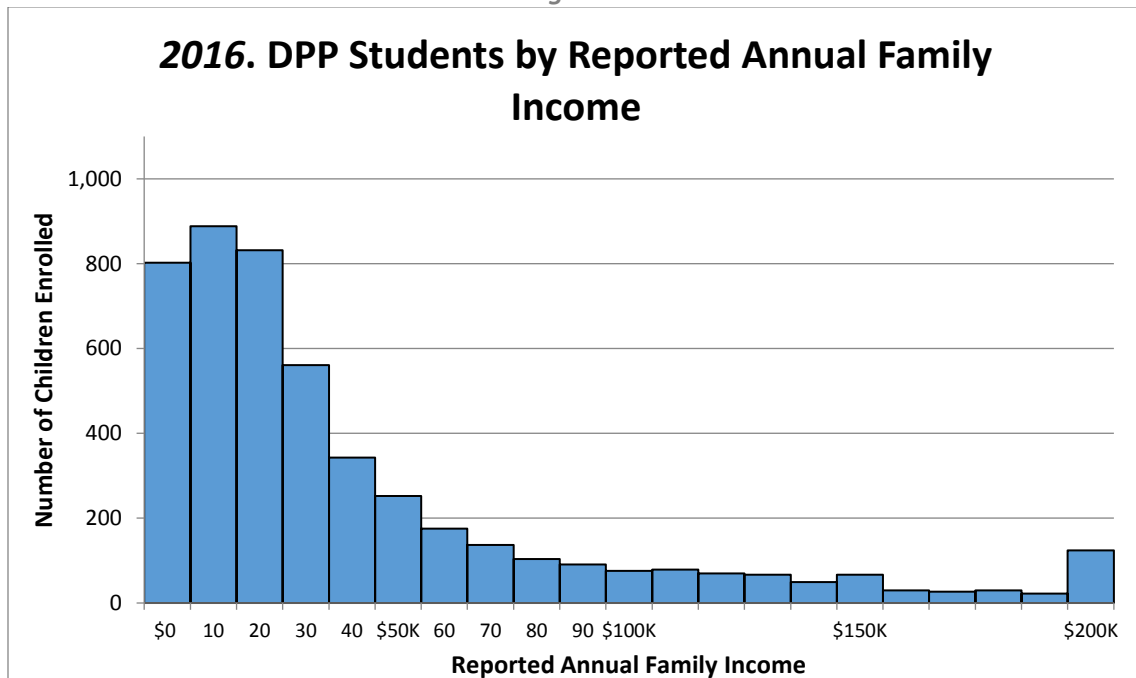


transition to a new rating system, there is no meaningful way to report that information in this transition year. The 2016-17 school year will establish a new baseline year.

Family Income

In 2016, DPP continued to serve Denver's lowest-income families. Approximately 52 percent of DPP families reported annual family incomes of \$30,000 or less. Only 20 percent of DPP families reported an annual family income of \$70,000 or higher, a slight increase from 2015. Figure 3 presents the distribution of children served by DPP in 2016 by annual family income.

Figure 3





Primary Home Language

Families reporting that English is their primary home language represented 53 percent of all students in 2016, down from 57 percent in 2015. Approximately 21 percent of the families enrolled in DPP during the 2016 school year reported primarily speaking Spanish at home, down from 23 percent in 2015. In 2016, a large number of families, 19 percent, did not report their home language on the application form. Table 3, below, details enrollment by language spoken at home.

Table 3

2016. DPP Students by Home Language	
English	52.6%
Spanish	20.9%
Vietnamese	0.5%
Arabic	0.8%
Multi-Lingual	3.2%
Other Language	2.8%
Not Provided	19.1%
Total	100.0%

Race and Ethnicity

The racial and ethnic distribution of children participating in the program this year was similar to previous years. However, the percentage of participants reporting “Hispanic” as their race/ethnicity continues to decrease, a pattern that began in 2013. Hispanic children still represent the largest race/ethnicity among DPP students, but their percentage of the DPP population has declined nearly 9 percent since its peak in 2012. White children represented 29 percent in 2016 and black children represented 13 percent of enrollees. Table 4, below, details the racial and ethnic distribution of children enrolled in DPP across all years of the program.

Table 4

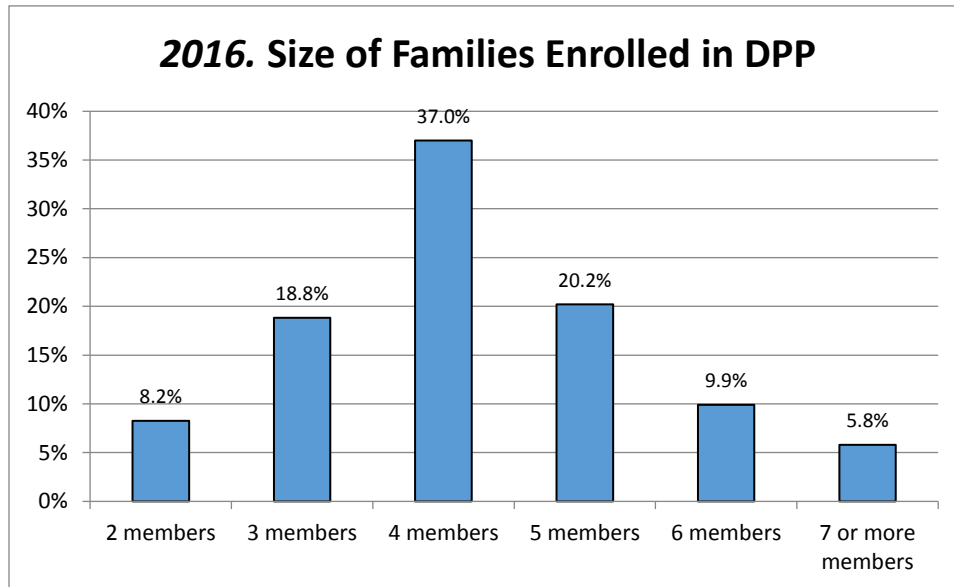
DPP Students by Child’s Race/Ethnicity and School Year									
Child’s Race/ Ethnicity	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Asian	2.4%	2.9%	3.1%	3.21%	3.1%	3.3%	3.1%	3.5%	3.5%
Black	9.4%	12.9%	12.5%	13.3%	12.6%	13.1%	12.6%	12.2%	12.7%
Hispanic	54.8%	51.8%	49.2%	51.0%	52.5%	49.9%	47.9%	46.3%	43.7%
Multi-Racial	4.30%	3.5%	5.1%	4.3%	4.3%	0.0%	6.3%	7.9%	7.4%
Native American	0.80%	1.1%	0.8%	0.9%	1.0%	0.9%	0.6%	1.0%	0.8%
White	21.8%	20.5%	27.4%	26.4%	26.0%	25.2%	27.9%	28.3%	28.6%
Other/ Missing/ Not Provided	6.5%	7.3%	1.8%	0.9%	0.4%	7.6%	1.6%	0.9%	3.3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%



Family Size

The distribution of students according to family size is presented in Figure 4, below Family size distribution in the program for 2016 looks similar to the distributions over the past five years.

Figure 4



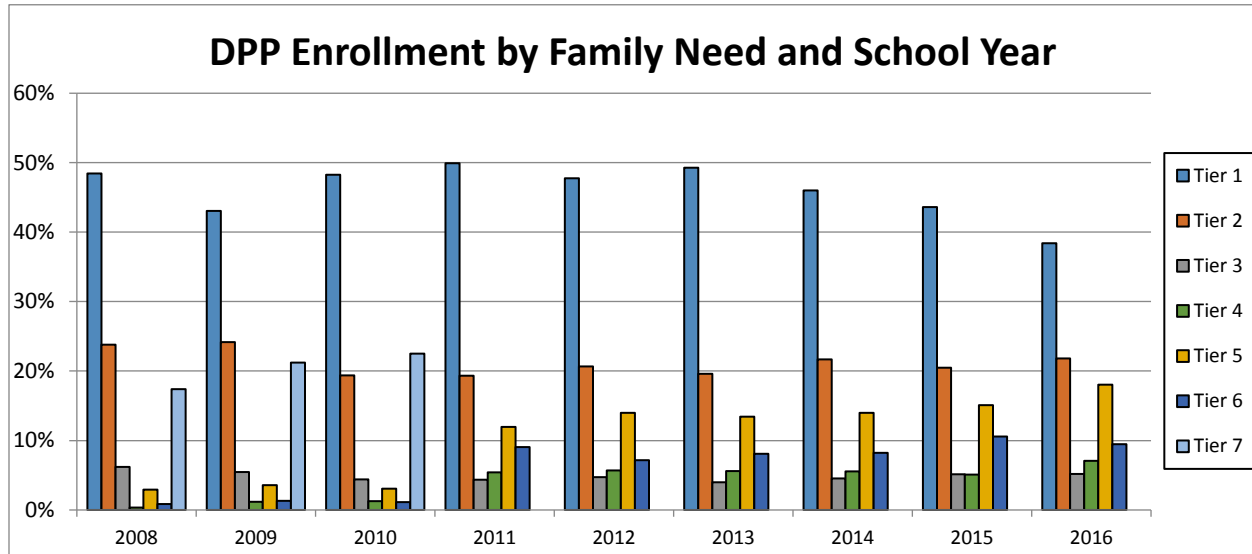
Level of Family Need (Income Tier Adjusted by Family Size)

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 seven family need categories or tiers. The tier 7 category was eliminated in 2011, so no students have been reported in this category for the past four years. Figure 5 presents the enrollment of DPP families by family need, according to these family need tiers. Please recall that the income tiers are *family need* tiers, and refer to income **and** family size. Tier 1 indicates the families with the highest need, and Tier 7 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 need for tuition credits.



This report later refers to income tiers when discussing parent survey results. It should be remembered that the income tiers cited later are used for demographic purposes, and are different from the family need tiers that are used in Figure 5, which refer to the tiers that determine tuition credits.

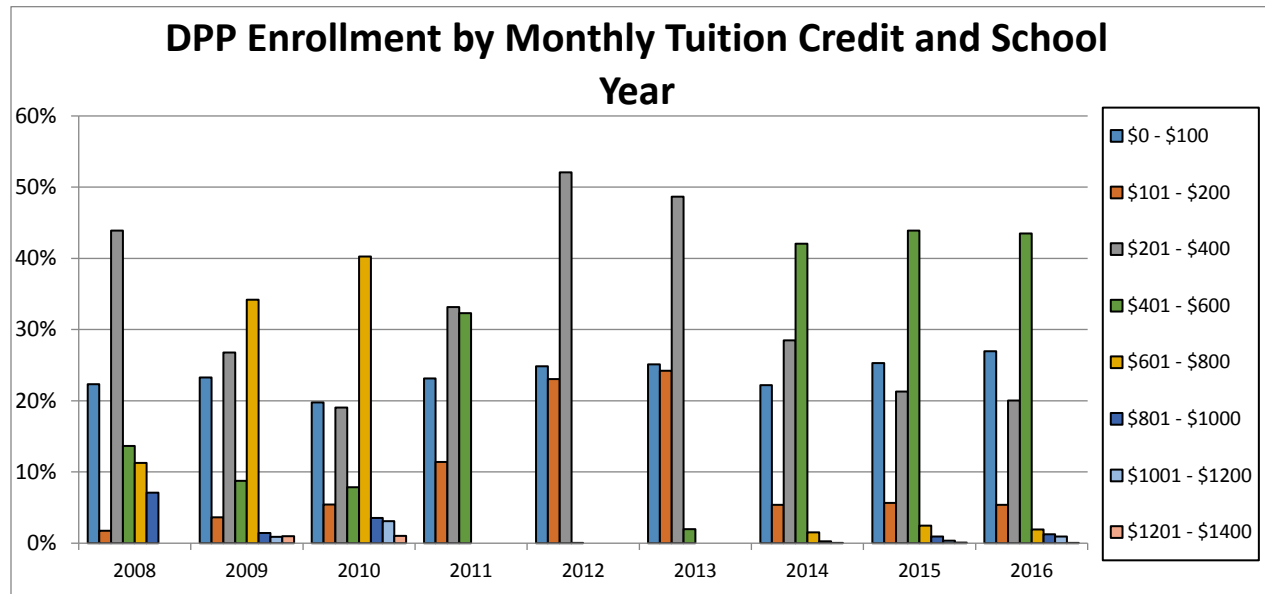
Figure 5





The calculation of a monthly tuition credit takes into account three factors: (1) the quality of the preschool, as defined by the DPP classroom 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 students by their approved monthly tuition credit amounts across the past eight academic years. Due to financial constraints of the program, the maximum tuition credit awarded was reduced in 2010. In 2016, still only 4 percent of families received a tuition credit over \$600 per month, compared to 48 percent in 2009-10. Nonetheless, the percent of families receiving tuition credits over \$400 per month has grown from virtually none in 2012 to 48 percent in 2016, showing an upward trend.

Figure 6





As a result of the economic climate and resulting financial constraints experienced by DPP, the average monthly tuition credit decreased sharply after 2010. However, as shown in Figure 7, since 2013 as the Denver economy improved, the average credit has increased for all families and most significantly for families in the lowest two income tiers. The average monthly tuition credit for families in the lowest income tier was \$466 in 2016, compared to \$253 four years ago.

Figure 7

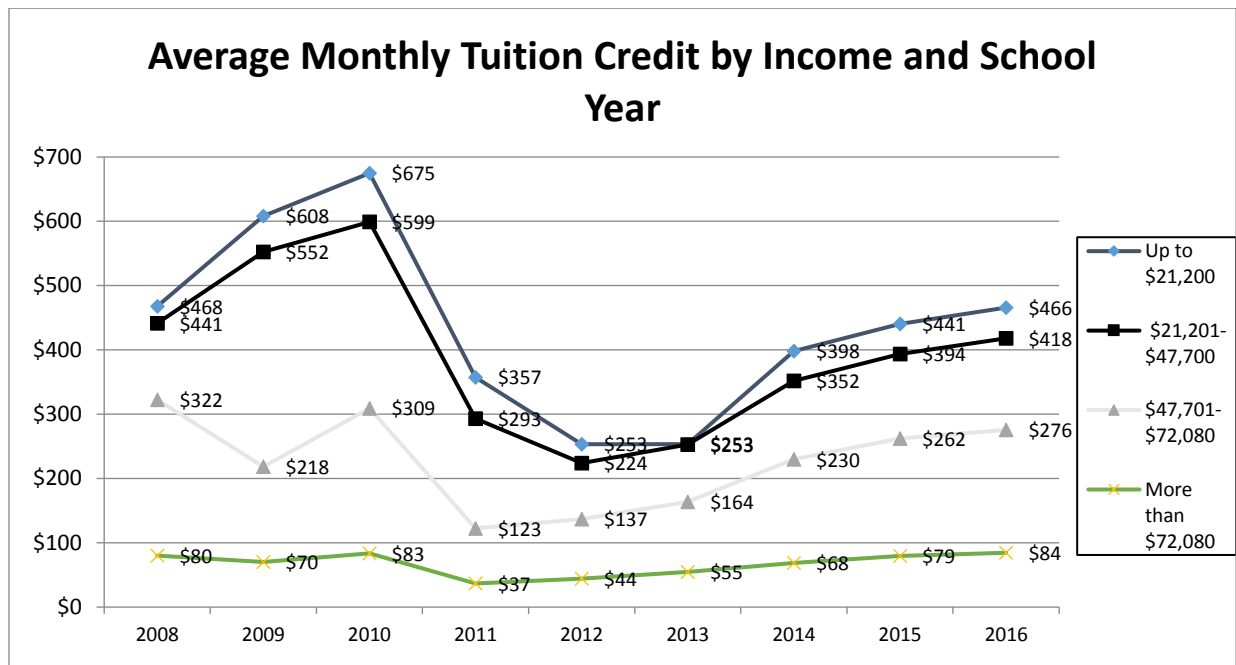
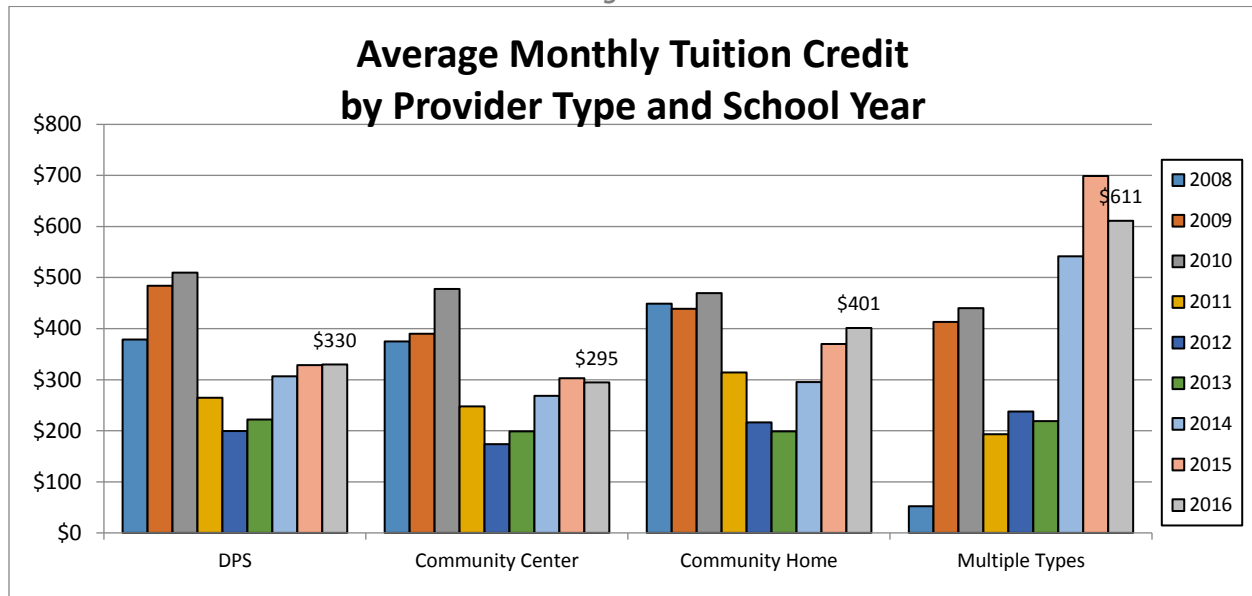




Figure 8 shows the average monthly tuition credit since 2008, by provider type. Since the tuition credit is determined by family need and hours of enrollment in addition to provider ratings, these averages reflect the different circumstances faced by families who choose to enroll in each provider.

Figure 8



III. Key Findings from the 2016 Evaluation

DPP leadership and the DPP evaluation team developed a number of evaluation questions in fall 2007. These questions were 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 coming years. The full list of evaluation questions and the related findings for 2016 from the parent and provider surveys can be found in Appendix A.

Many of these questions have been answered through surveys of DPP providers and the parents of enrolled DPP children. This section highlights the key findings from the 2016 DPP parents and provider survey responses. These responses are organized into three areas:

1. The benefit of DPP to families, children, and providers;
2. The impact of DPP on preschool quality; and
3. DPP operations

The Benefit of DPP to Families, Children, and Providers

The DPP tuition credit has had a significant impact on the number of children who are enrolled in preschool. Figure 9 shows that in 2016, 33-48 percent of families in the two lowest income tiers would not have enrolled their child in preschool without the DPP tuition credit. This compares to 5 percent of families in the highest family income tier who would not have enrolled their child without DPP. In this way, the DPP tuition credit is having a disproportionately positive effect on preschool enrollment for the lowest-income families.



Figure 9

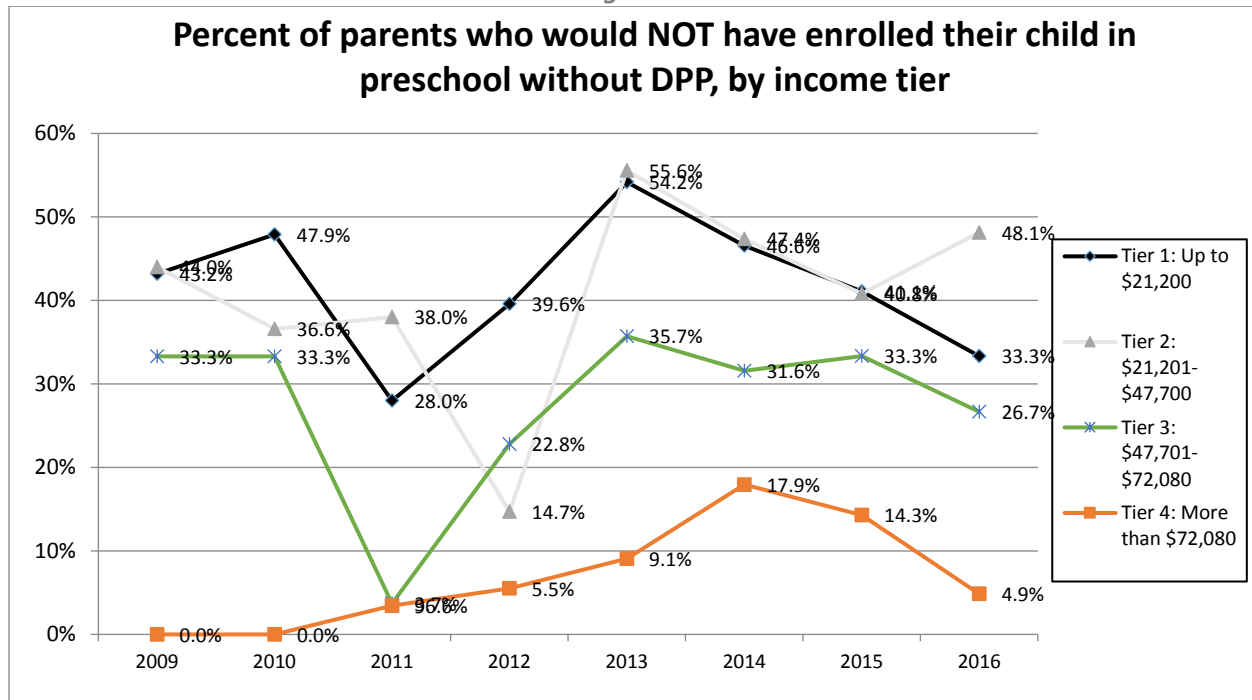
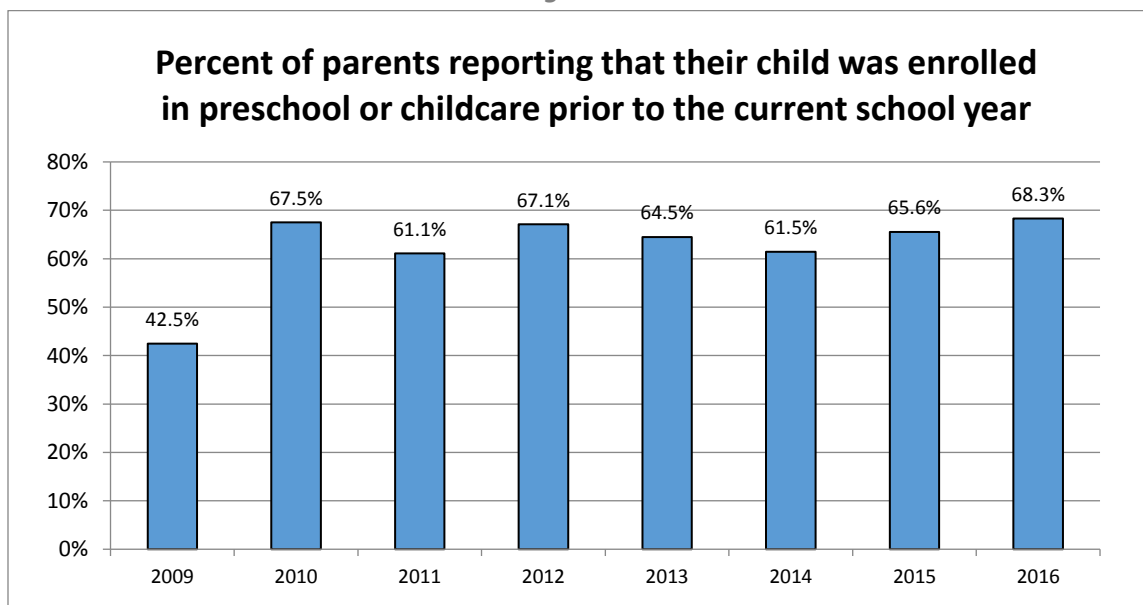


Figure 10 shows that more than 68 percent of parents report that their child was enrolled in a childcare or preschool prior to the DPP year. This figure has gone up nearly 7 percent over the last three years.

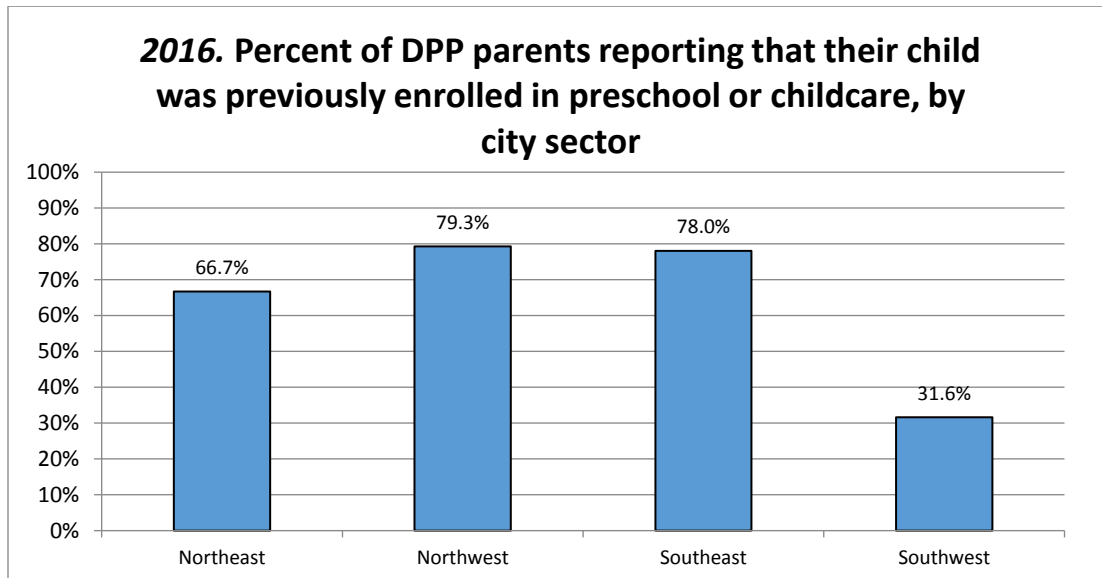
Figure 10





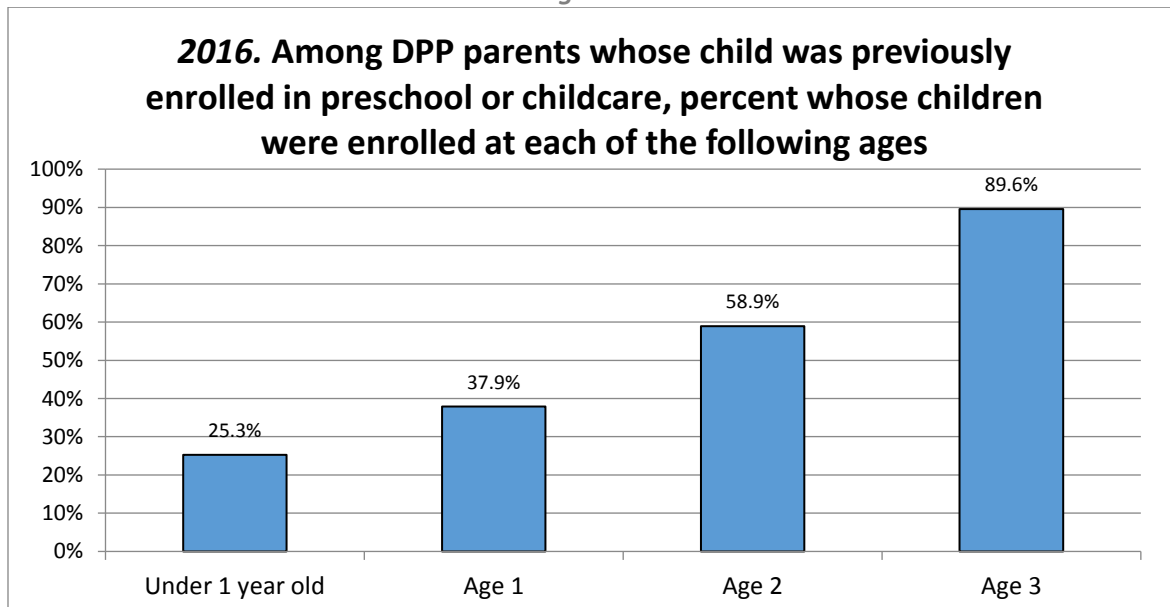
Parents living in the southwest sector of Denver were much less likely to report that their children previously attended preschool or childcare. Figure 11 indicates that only 32 percent of families in living in this part of the city previously enrolled their child in preschool or childcare the year before being enrolled in DPP, compared to 67-79 percent in the other sectors of the city. This suggests a lack of access to quality preschool or childcare for 3-year old children in the southwest sector.

Figure 11



Not surprisingly, parents who had previously enrolled their child in preschool or childcare were more likely to enroll their child in preschool or childcare as the child grew older. Figure 12 presents this pattern of enrollment by age of child.

Figure 12





Parents' reasons for enrolling their children in preschool are shown in Figure 13 below. The most common reason in 2016 was to "develop the ability to interact with other children," which has consistently been an important reason since 2009. Over time, the number of parents selecting "experience a creative environment" has been gradually decreasing.

Figure 13

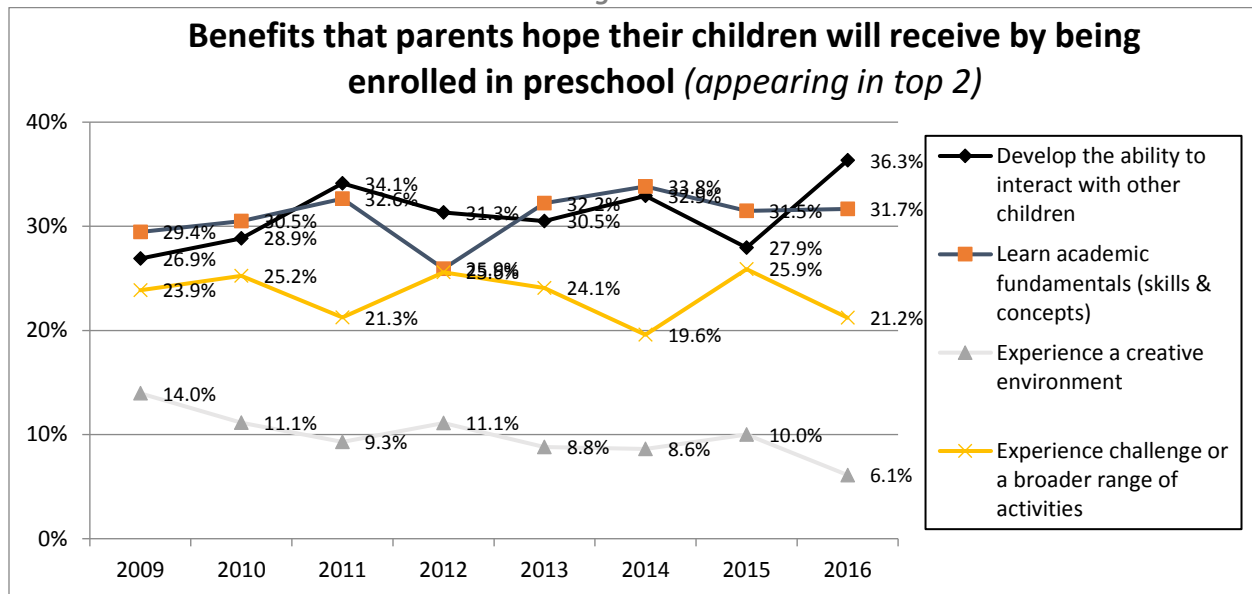
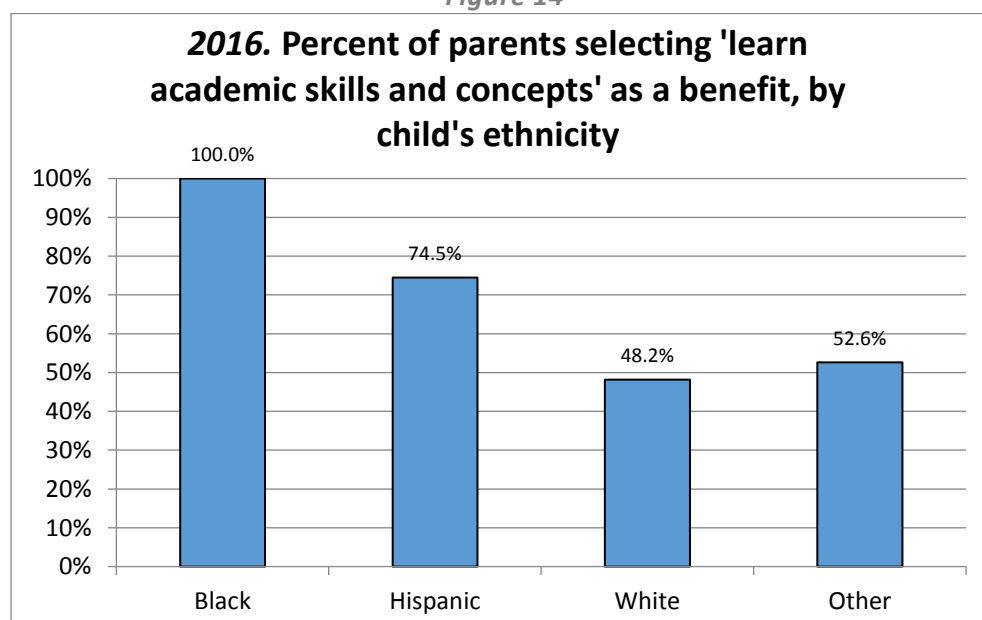


Figure 14 shows the percent of parents selecting "learn academic skills and concepts" as a benefit, broken down by child's race/ethnicity. Families of white children were less likely to select this benefit of preschool when compared with families of black and Hispanic students.

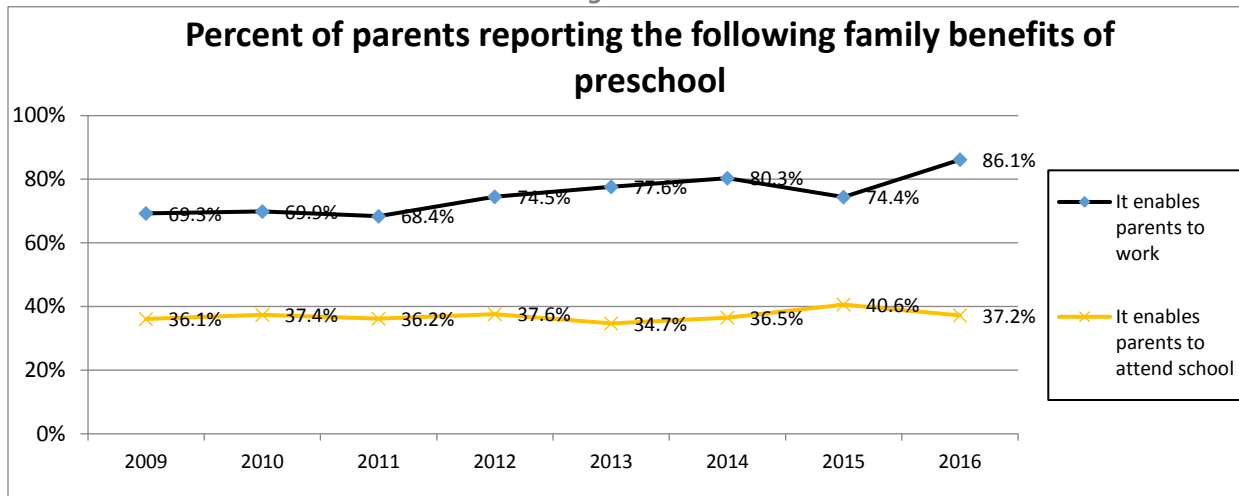
Figure 14





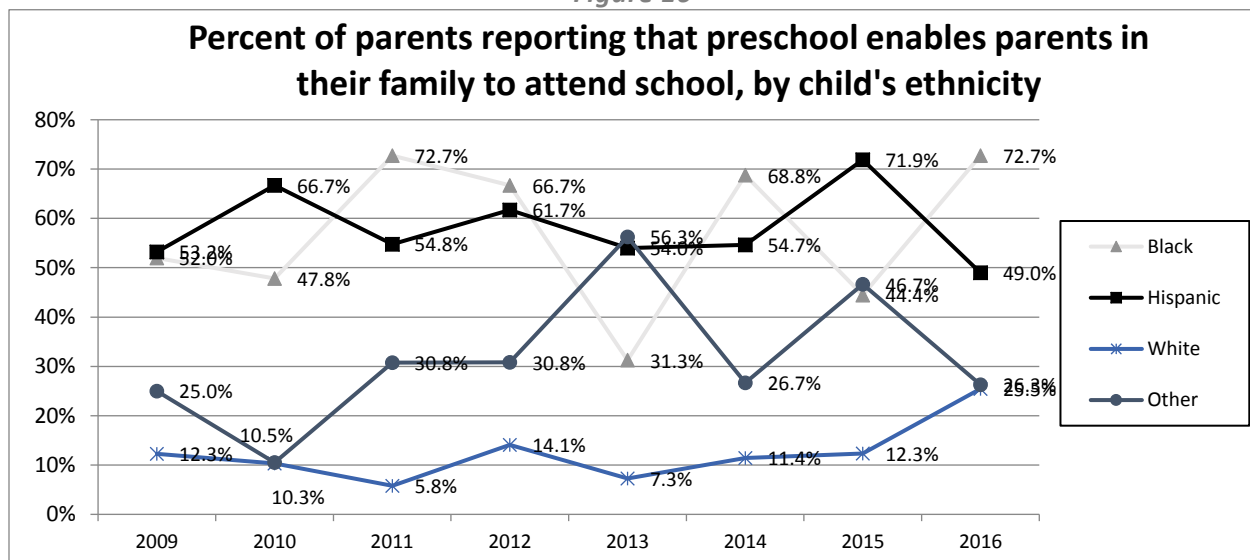
Preschool is known to have benefits for children and analysis of TCAP and PARCC results from the first three DPP cohorts has shown that the benefits of attending DPP preschools persist through third, fourth grade, and fifth grade⁷. However, DPP also has an immediate impact in the preschool year for families. Figure 15 shows the family benefits of preschool, with about 86 percent of parents reporting that DPP allows parents to work and 37 percent reporting it allows them to attend school.

Figure 15



Figures 16 and 17 show the impact of DPP on enabling families to attend school, broken down by the child's race and ethnicity and by family income tier. This benefit is disproportionately higher for black and Hispanic families, and for lower-income families. In this way, the DPP tuition credit is enabling low-income and minority families to attend school and improve their employability.

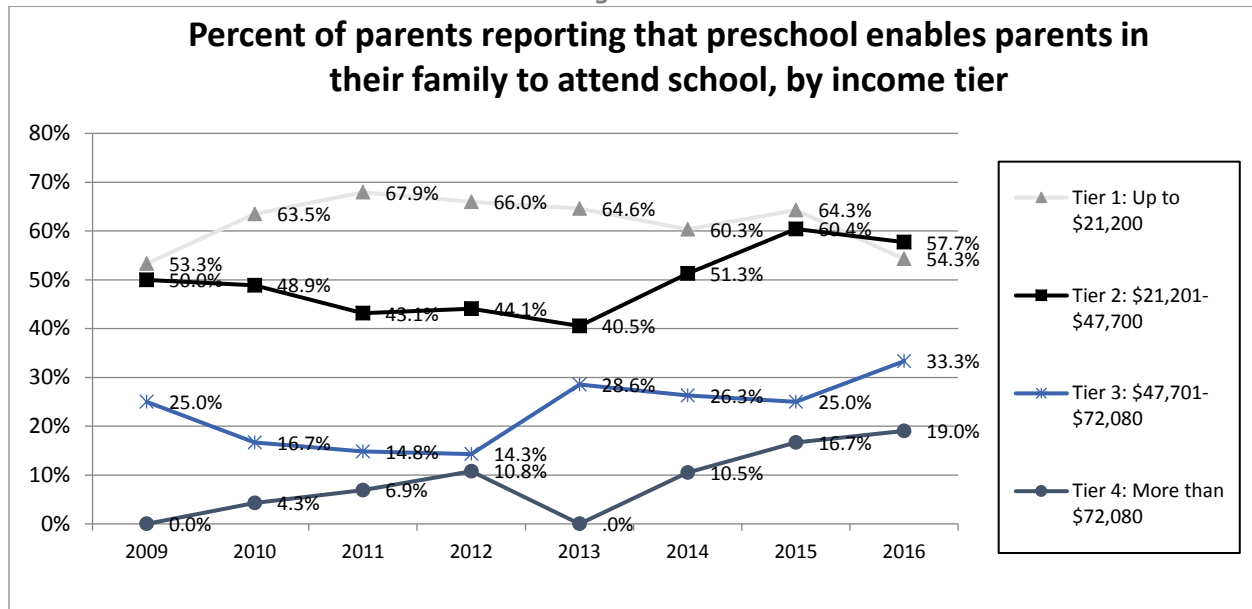
Figure 16



⁷There have been several memos on these results. The most recent is the *DPP 2010-2011 Cohort Sample of 200 Analysis and Third Grade PARCC Results Analysis* authored by APA in early 2016.

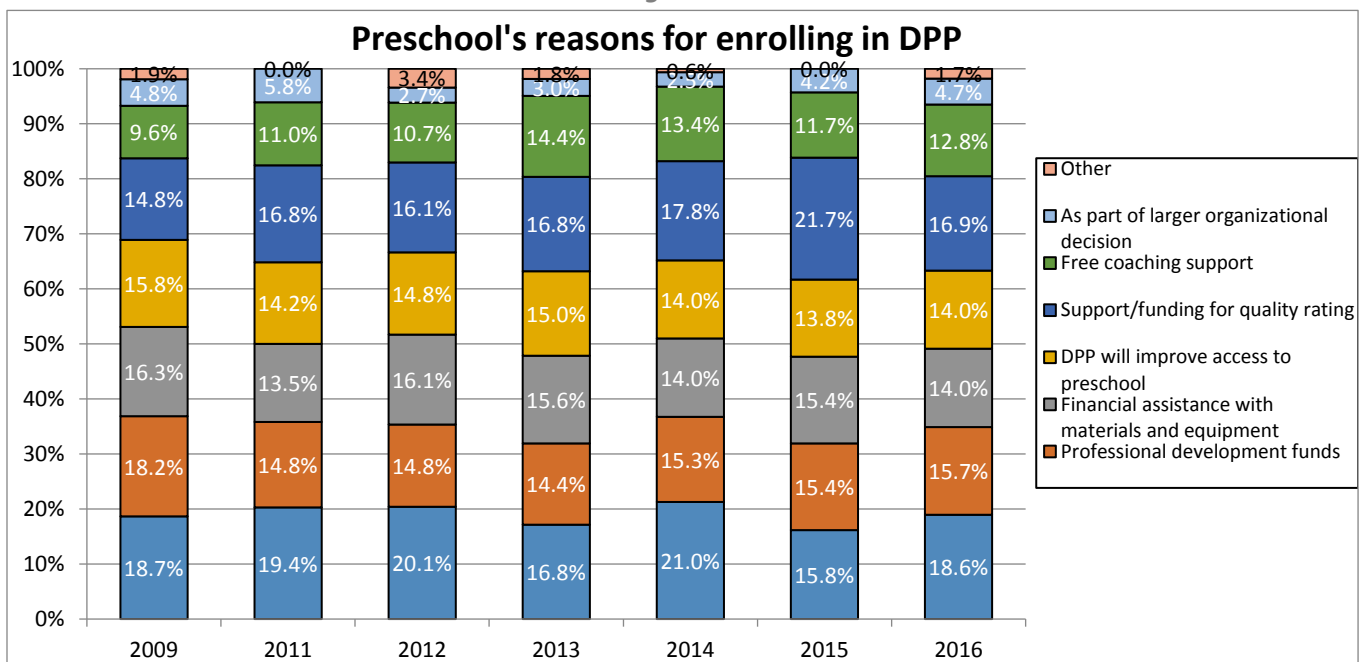


Figure 17



Finally, preschools also reap important benefits from participating in DPP. Figure 18 shows the reasons why providers enroll in the program. Preschools selected two benefits from eight benefits listed in the survey question. The results have been fairly consistent over the course of the program, with one of providers' main drivers historically being the financial assistance DPP provides to families. However, it is also clear that the quality improvement supports provided by DPP, such as funding for the quality rating, coaching support, and professional development funds, are also key reasons providers enroll in DPP.

Figure 18





Denver Preschool Program's Impact on Preschool Quality

One of DPP's key goals is to raise the level of preschool quality in Denver. A number of questions in the annual parent and provider surveys address quality and parents' perception of quality.

Figure 19, below, shows the top factors that parents consider when enrolling their child in preschool. Parents have identified "convenient location" and "reputation of quality" as the two top factors they consider when selecting a preschool consistently since 2009. Cost of tuition continues to be a much less influential factor, selected by only 5 to 7 percent of parents every year.

Figure 19

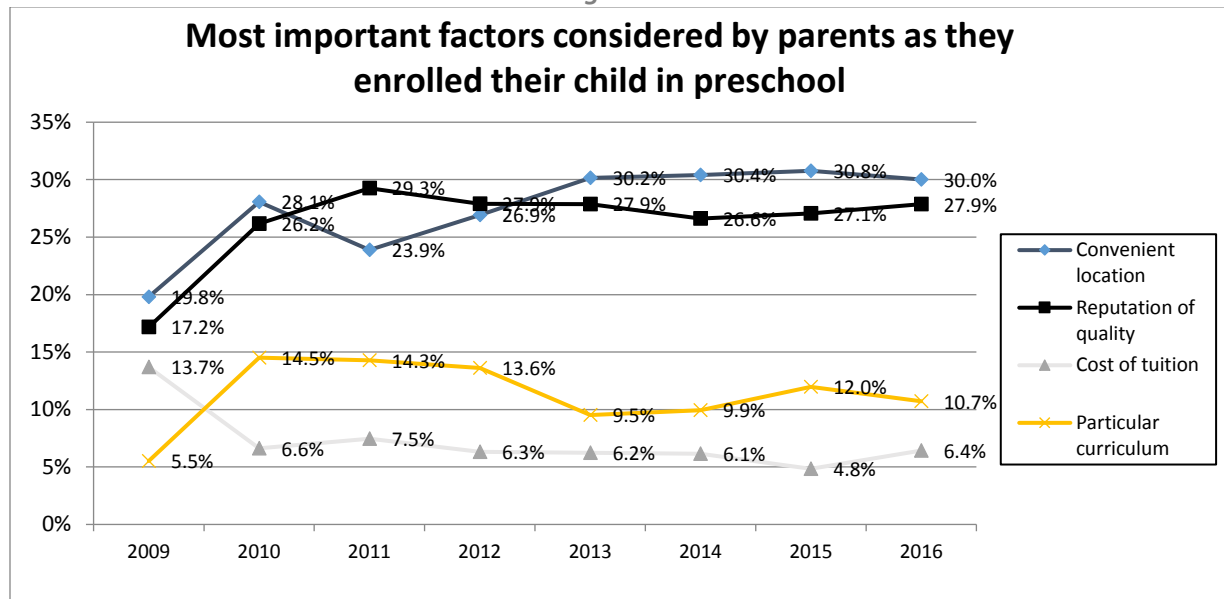
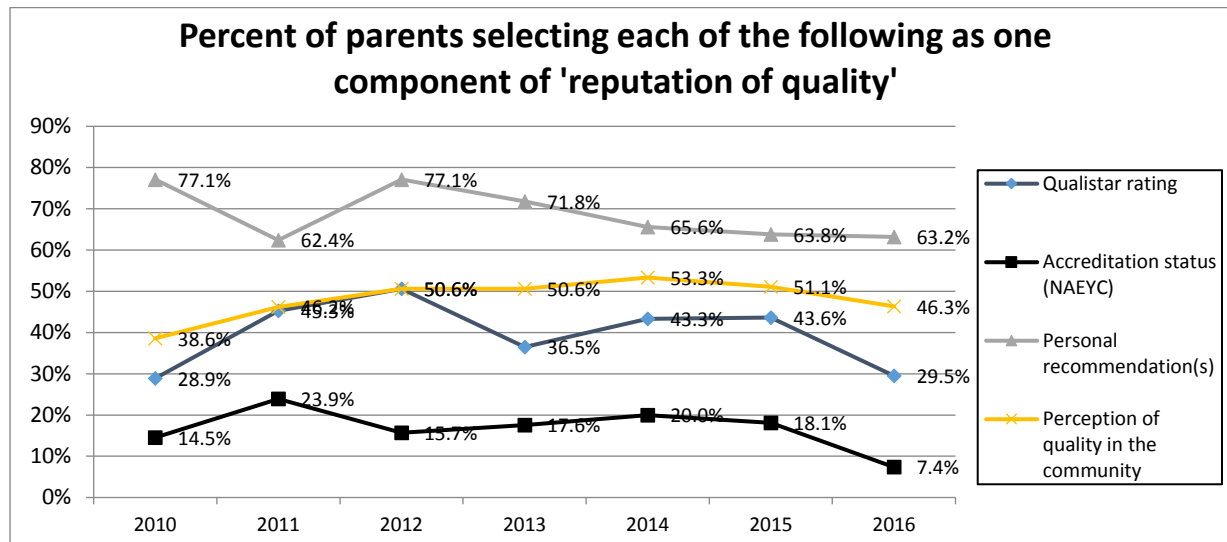




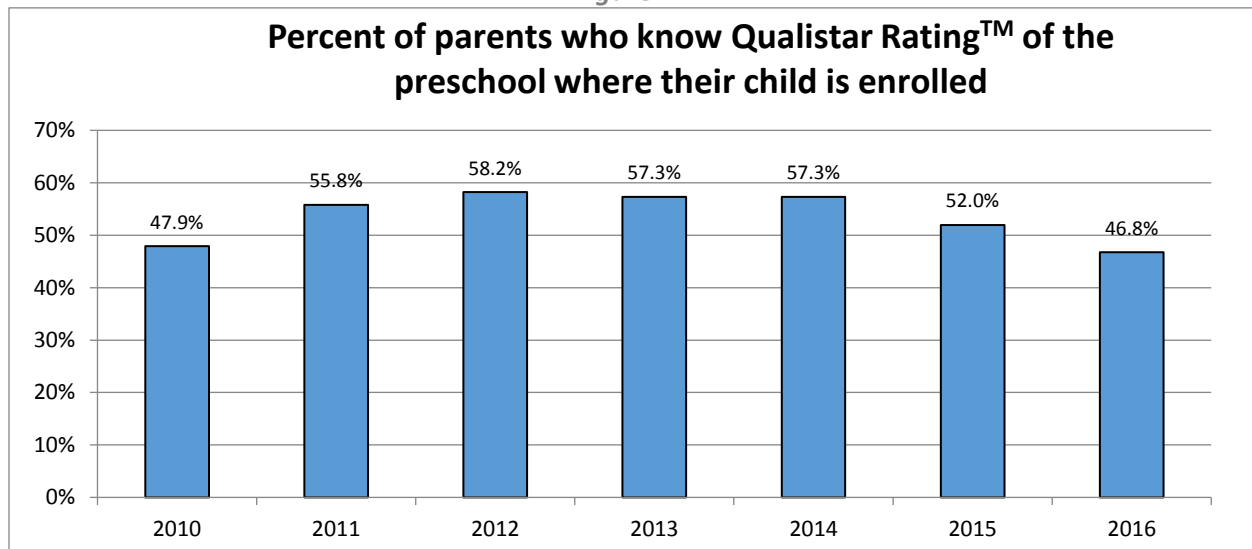
Figure 20 lists the components of what parents mean by “reputation of quality,” with “personal recommendation” being the most highly rated component, followed by “perception of quality in the broader community.” A majority of parents did not consider the Qualistar Rating™ to be a key component of quality over the past seven years. In 2016, the survey asked parents if they used the Colorado Shines ratings as a component of reputation and only 13 percent of parents reported using it, less than half of the percentage of parents using the Qualistar Rating™.

Figure 20



As shown in Figure 21, the number of parents who know the Qualistar Rating™ of the preschool where their child is enrolled decreased by more than 10 percent since 2014. The recent decrease may be due in part to confusion created by the shift from Qualistar Ratings™ to Colorado Shines ratings.

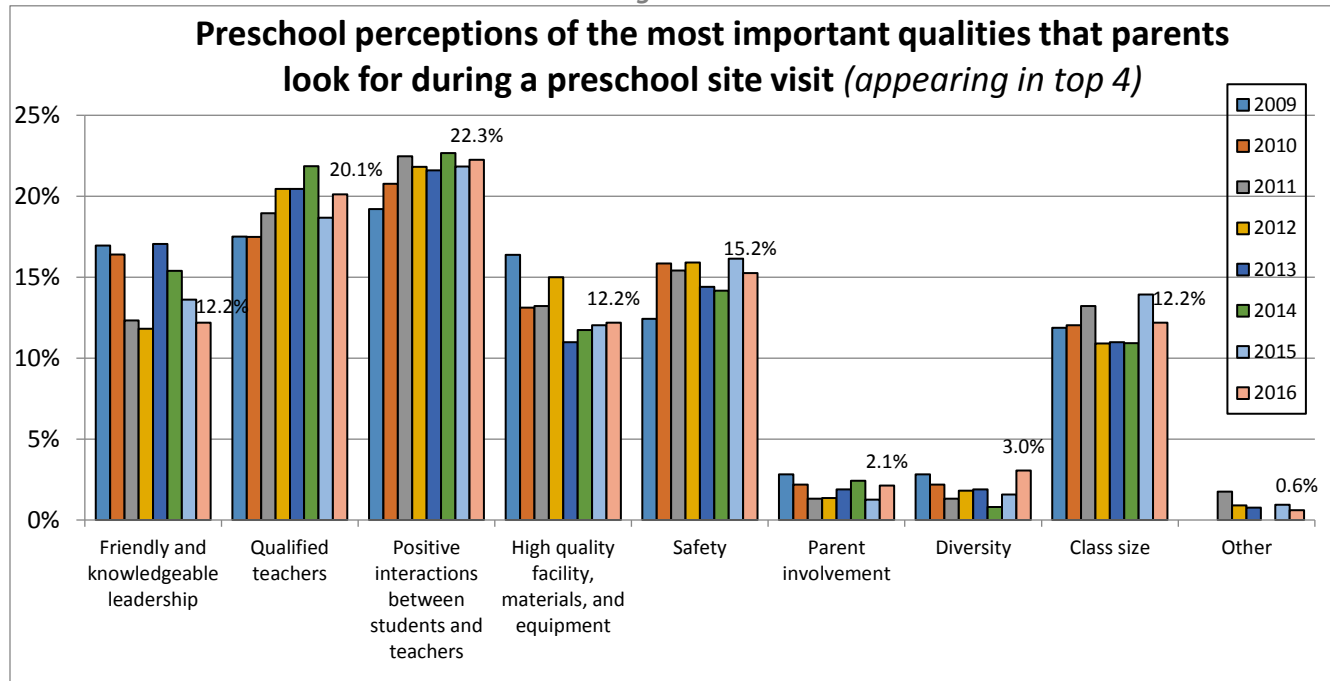
Figure 21





Given that these data suggest parents are not focused on the Qualistar Rating™ as their determinant of quality, it is useful to look at what attributes they look for when conducting pre-enrollment site visits, to ascertain how parents define quality. Figure 22 below shows the top qualities parents reported looking for during preschool visits.

Figure 22



The results show that parents have consistently selected teacher qualifications and student-teacher interactions as the most important qualities. These data support DPP's decision to add the CLASS® observation to its overall rating system, as the CLASS® measures teacher interactions, something parents are clearly interested in when selecting a preschool.



Providers were also asked for their perception of how parents determine quality and what parents look for in a site visit. Figure 23 shows that providers generally understand that parents determine a preschool's reputation based on "personal recommendations" and the "perception of quality in the community."

Figure 23

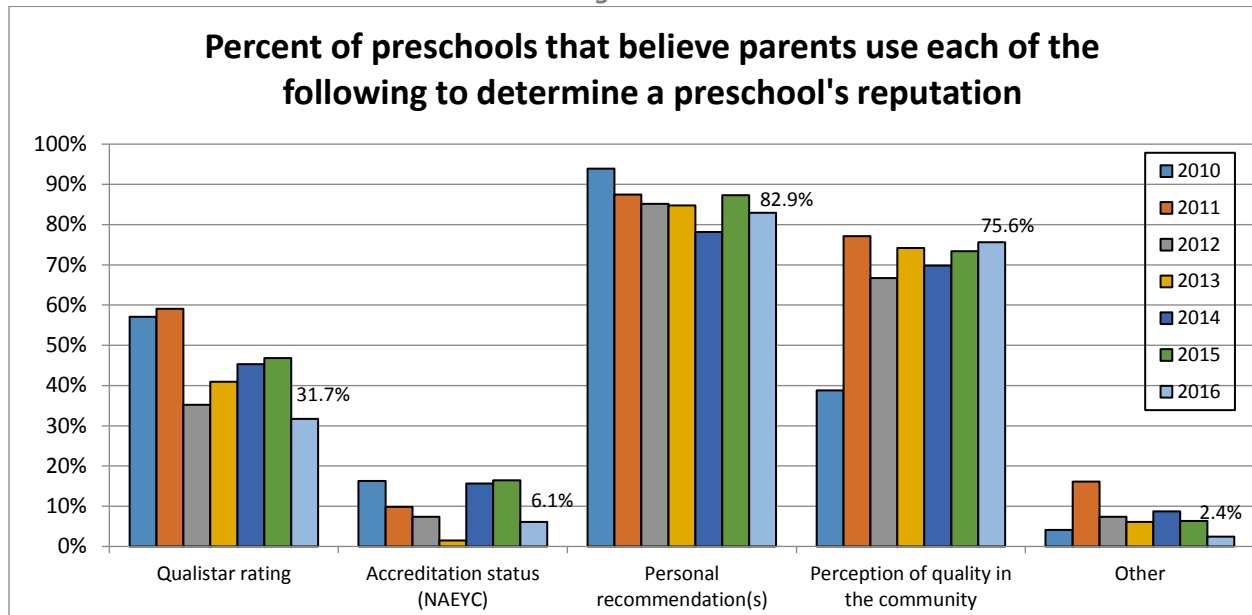
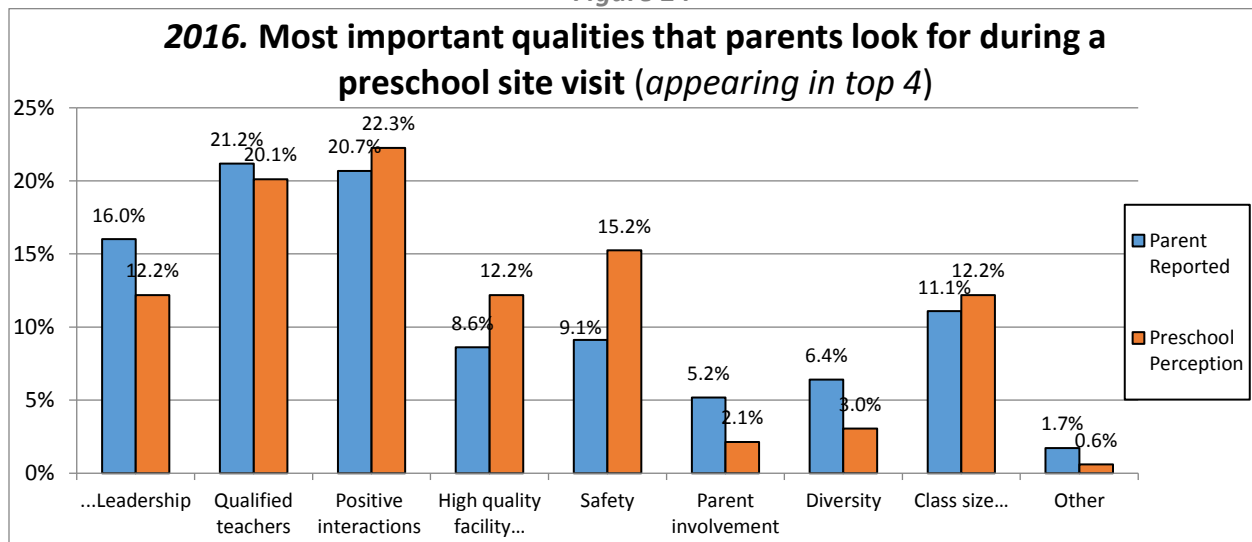


Figure 24 shows that there are gaps in what parents report and what preschools believe parents are looking for in a preschool. For example, providers are likely to underestimate the importance of "leadership" to parents and likely to overestimate the importance of "a high quality facility" and "safety." These results indicate that there are a number of areas of concern to parents that providers could highlight during site visits.

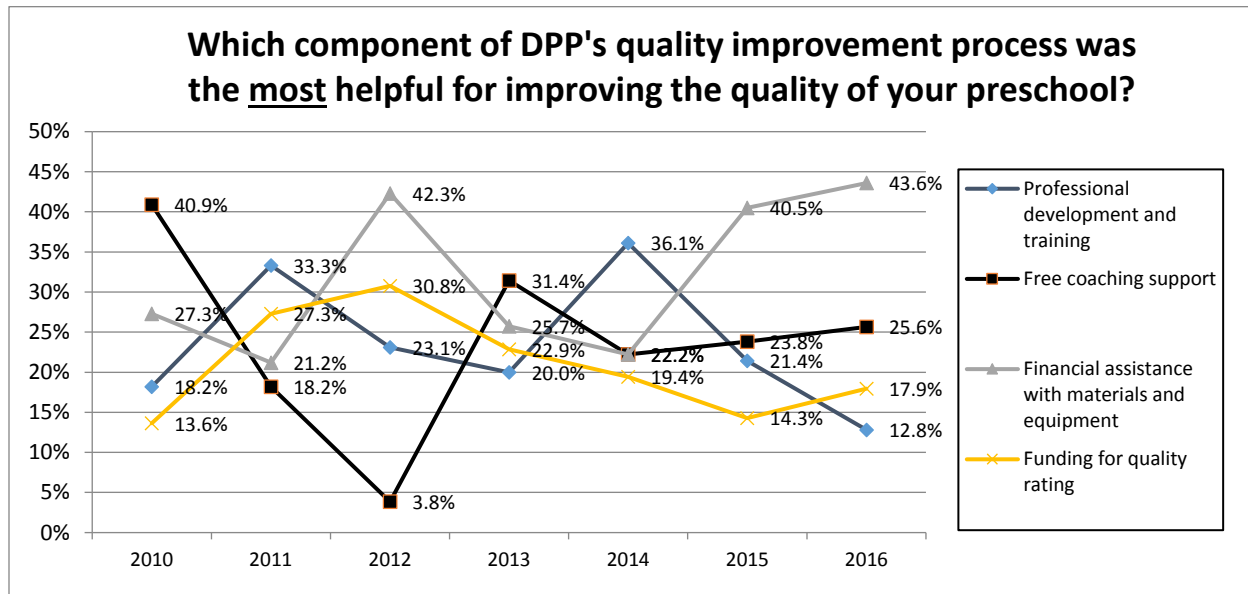
Figure 24





To help drive improvements in quality, DPP provides quality improvement resources to eligible providers. Nearly 87 percent of providers took advantage of DPP quality improvement resources in 2016. Figure 25, below, shows which of the supports providers indicated were the most helpful for improving quality. As seen in the chart, the responses have varied over time with “financial assistance with materials and equipment” rated as the most helpful component in 2015 and 2016. In 2014, “professional development and training” was rated as the most helpful, but was rated as the least helpful in both 2013 and 2016. A number of drivers likely affect these responses, including the different professional development courses offered through DPP and the broader Denver and/or Colorado economy and its impact on providers’ ability to fund updates to their equipment and materials.

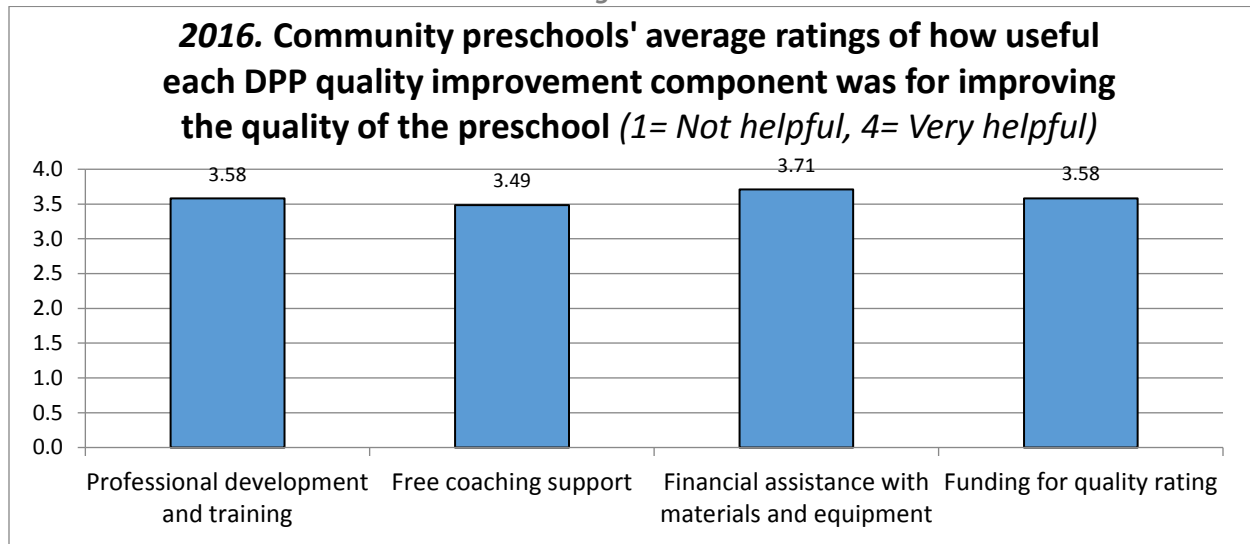
Figure 25





Despite the variation in Figure 26 regarding which component was the *most* useful, Figure 26 shows that providers rated all quality improvement components highly, with all four components receiving a rating of 3.49 or above on a four point scale.

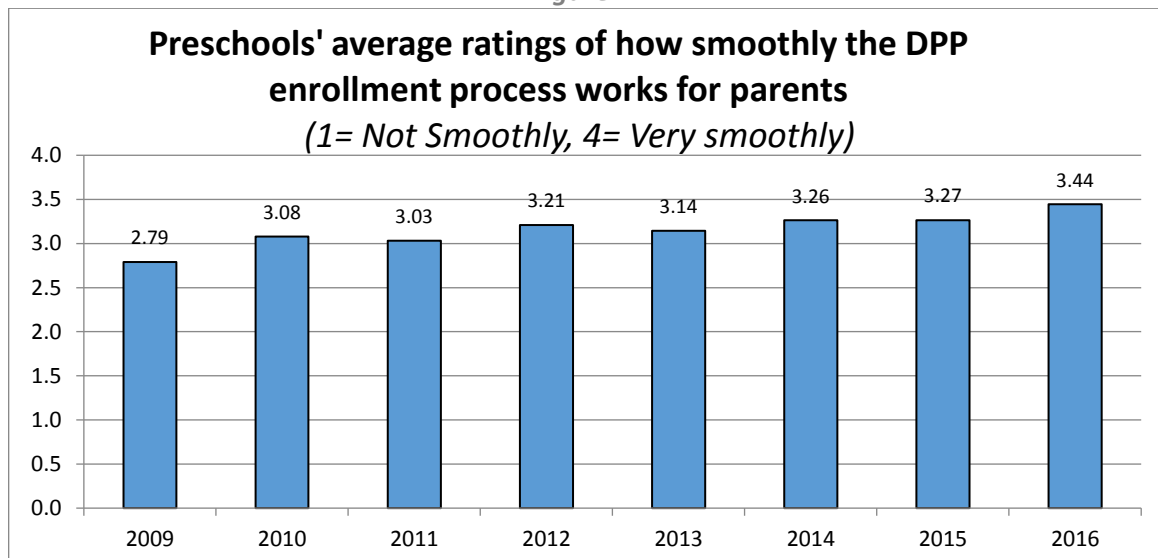
Figure 26



Denver Preschool Program Operations

The final key area that will be highlighted in this evaluation report concerns DPP operations. Preschools were asked for their opinions on the DPP child enrollment process. Figure 27 shows that providers believe the enrollment process works fairly smoothly for parents, with the average provider rating of the DPP parent enrollment process of 3.44 on a four-point scale.

Figure 27





Providers are also satisfied with the tuition credit payment process, giving the process an average rating of 3.44, on a four-point scale, consistent with the last four years (Figure 28). Additionally, providers are continuing to report that the tuition credits are almost always received in a timely manner (Figure 29).

Figure 28

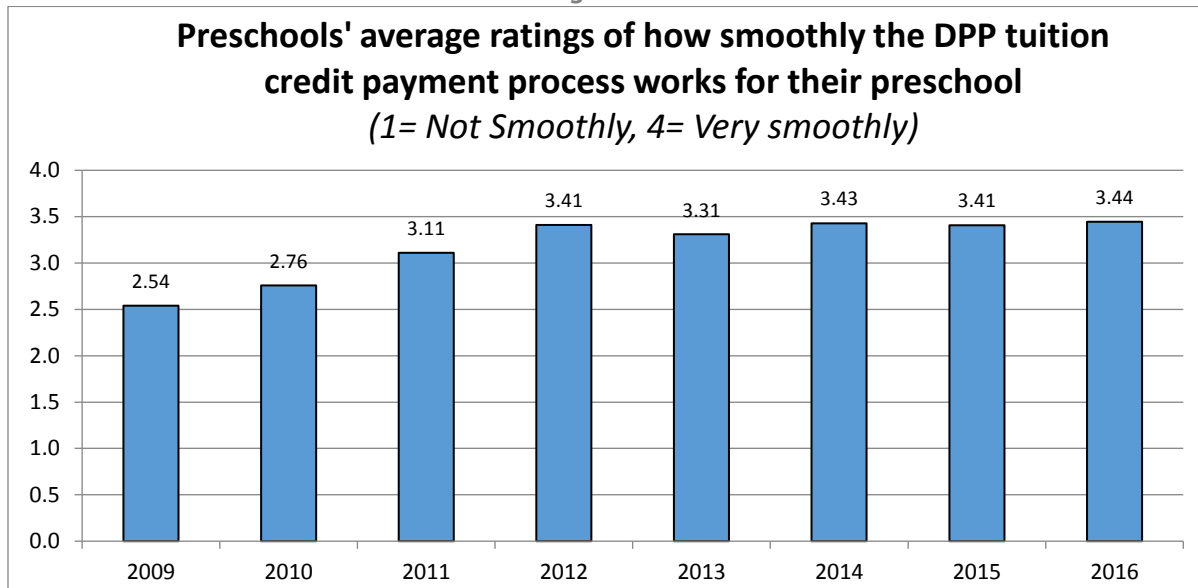
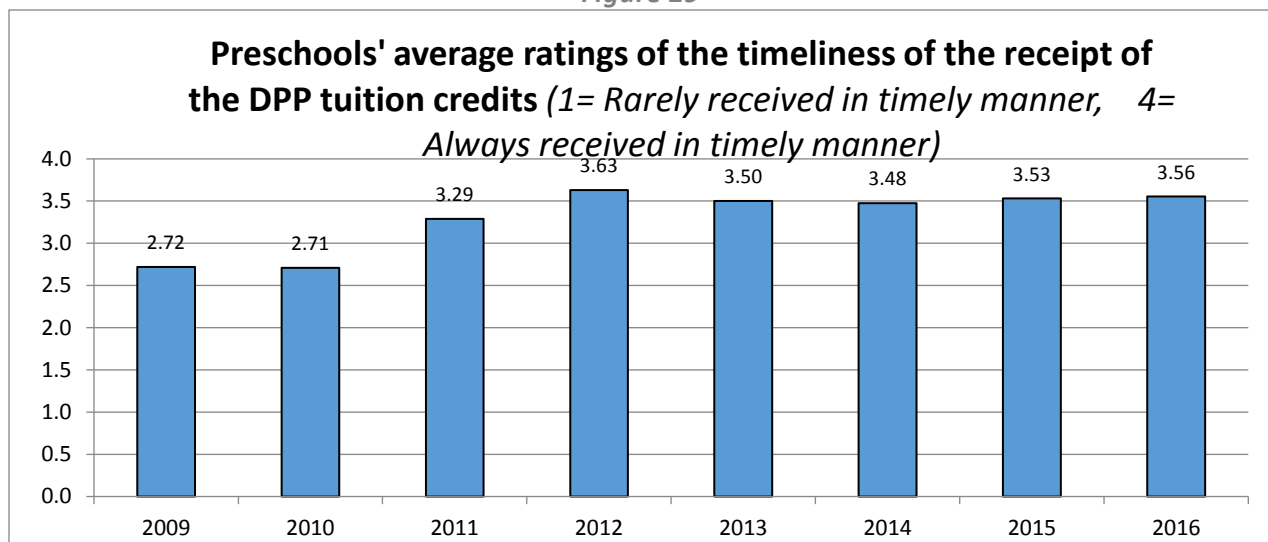


Figure 29





Finally, Figures 30 and 31 present providers' operational and policy concerns about DPP. Figure 30 shows that providers have very few operational concerns about DPP, with over 35 percent of providers reporting no concerns. Amongst those providers indicating an operational concern, the most cited concern was the time/effort to prepare for the rating process.

Figure 30

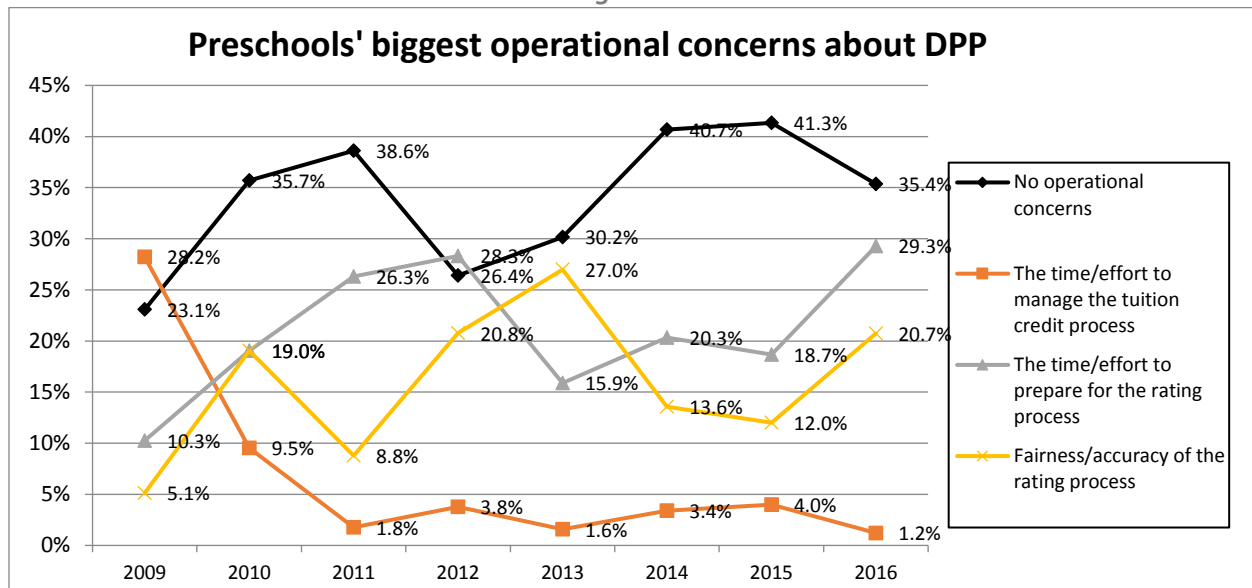
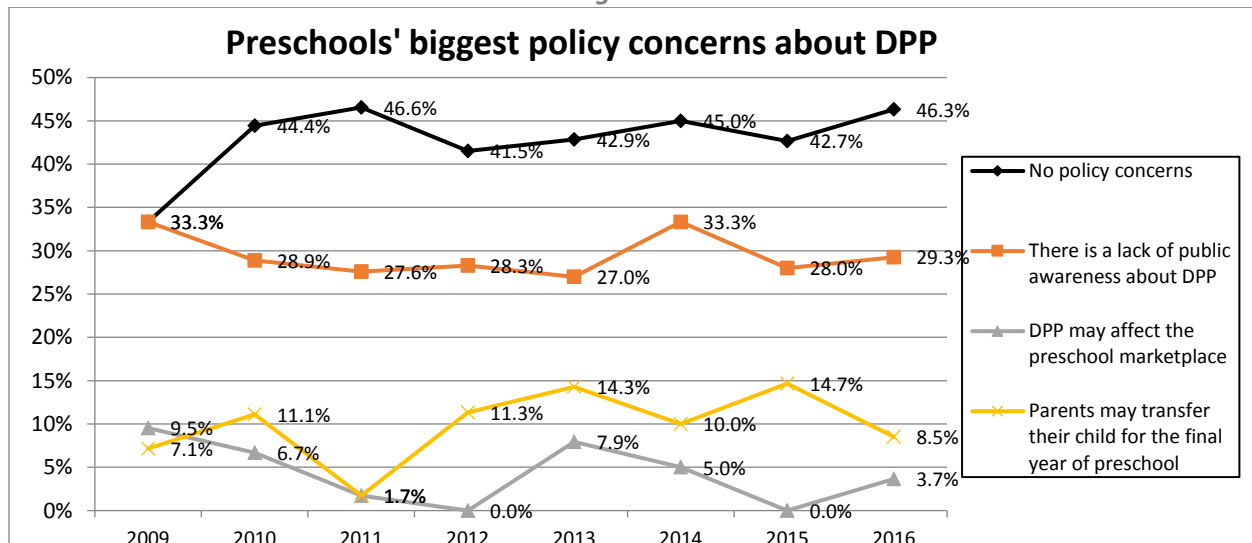


Figure 31 shows providers' policy concerns about DPP. Over 46 percent of providers have no policy concerns, but 29 percent of providers indicated a concern about the lack of public awareness about DPP.

Figure 31





Providers generally characterize DPP as relatively effective for the families it serves. Figure 32 presents long term effectiveness ratings for the program. Just as important, DPP providers believe that DPP is successful at providing quality preschool to Denver children. Figure 33 presents these results.

Figure 32

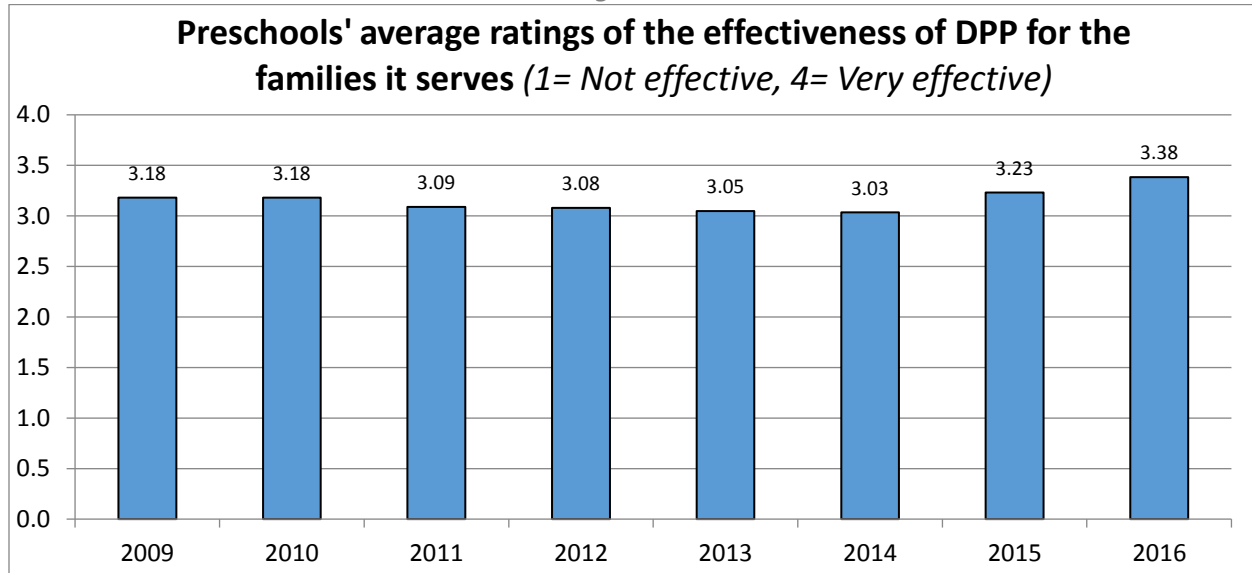
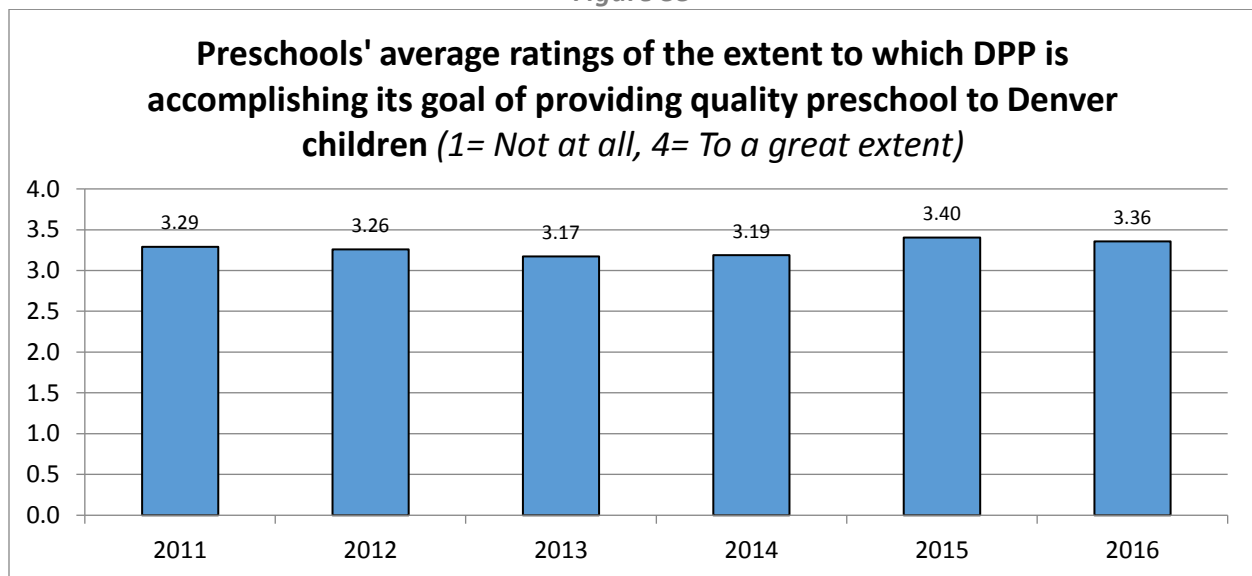


Figure 33





IV. Conclusion

In 2006, voters approved the Denver Preschool Program (DPP) to encourage families to enroll their four-year-old children in quality preschool programs so that the children would be prepared to enter kindergarten ready to learn and to increase the likelihood of their success in kindergarten and beyond.

Since its first year of operation during the 2008 school year, DPP has made significant progress toward these goals. APA has been evaluating DPP since its first year of operation and can make the following statements about DPP over the long term:

- With the exception of 2008 and 2015 school years, DPP has consistently enrolled between 5,300 and 6,000 students. This suggests that DPP has reached the degree of saturation possible without altering its recruitment of particular target populations.
- While there is some room for improvement, DPP operations have run effectively and smoothly over the past five years.
- DPP tuition credits have enabled many Denver families to enroll their children in preschool who would not otherwise do so. The credits appeared to be particularly helpful to lower income families.
- DPP has also had an important economic impact on families, by allowing parents to work or attend school, investing in their economic futures.
- Though the evaluation, DPP has learned a great deal about how parents make decisions about preschool enrollment and selection.

This operations report primarily addresses the 2016 school year, however, and in 2016, DPP achieved the following milestones:

- A total of 245 approved DPP preschool sites;
- A total of 5,322 children in the 2016 school year received approval for DPP tuition credits;
- Of 245 sites, 192 have a DPP CDHS rating of 3, 4, or 5 stars, the three highest ratings; and
- The vast majority of DPP students attended top rated classrooms. In 2016, 88 percent of DPP students attended a 3, 4, or 5 star classroom.

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

- **DPP continues to provide high-quality preschool to a majority of four-year-olds in Denver**, serving more than 5,300 children in 2016.
- DPP continues to have a **positive impact on preschool quality** in Denver. Approximately 88 percent of DPP sites are rated as 3, 4, or 5 star programs, and providers continue to rate highly the quality improvement supports offered by the program, especially financial assistance with materials and equipment.
- Parents are focused on **teacher qualifications** and **positive teacher-child interactions** when considering a preschool for their child. In determining a preschool's reputation of quality, parents are more likely to **rely on recommendations from people they know** and on broader community perceptions, rather than on the Qualistar Rating™, Colorado Shines ratings, or national accreditation status.



- The **DPP tuition credit allows parents to work or attend school**, with 86 percent of all parents reporting that DPP allows them to work. Over 37 percent of parents report that DPP allows them to attend school. This impact was greatest for lower-income families, and for children from black or Hispanic families.
- Parents continue to report that by enrolling their child in preschool they hope that they will **experience challenge or a broader range of activities, learn academic skills and concepts**, and develop the ability to **interact with other children**.
- DPP **operations continue to run smoothly**, with providers indicating very few operational or policy concerns. Providers also report that tuition payments are received in a timely manner.



Appendix A: Denver Preschool Program Evaluation Questions and Detailed Findings

In fall 2007, DPP leadership and the evaluation team developed a set of evaluation questions. These questions were refined in 2013 to take into account changes in DPP operations and procedures. The current evaluation questions are listed 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.

Table A1

DPP Evaluation Questions	
A. Information and Knowledge about DPP: What do families know about DPP and how accurate is that knowledge?	
1.	Are parents informed about the existence of DPP and about how to apply for the tuition credits?
2.	Are parents aware of the goals of DPP? Are parents aware that DPP is distinct from DPS?
3.	Are parents aware of how DPP is funded?
4.	Does this knowledge vary by income level or language spoken at home?
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?	
1.	Does the DPP application system make it easy for families and providers to participate?
2.	Does the system work effectively across family income levels and/or the language spoken by the parent?
C. Tuition credits: Do tuition credits encourage parents from all income levels to send their four-year-old children to high-quality preschools?	
1.	Does the availability of the preschool tuition credits encourage families to enroll in the program?
2.	Do families opt for higher quality programs because of the tuition credits?
3.	Is family behavior in these areas influenced by income level or the language spoken by the parent?
D. Quality Improvement: Do quality improvement resources change the quality of participating preschool programs?	
1.	Did the number of rated and/or accredited programs change as a result of the DPP QI program?
2.	Did the quality of participating programs increase as a result of DPP?
3.	Did changes in quality vary by provider type or star rating?
E. Child Development: What is the impact of DPP on student development?	
1.	Did children make progress in their development while in participating DPP preschool environments (i.e., language, literacy, mathematics, social-emotional development, etc.)?
2.	To what extent and in what areas are DPP students ready for Kindergarten?
3.	Do children from different income levels and with different primary languages make similar progress in their development while in DPP early childhood environments?
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?

The following section addresses all of the evaluation questions set forth in Table A1 above in the order that they appear in the table, with two exceptions. It is not possible to fully address the Quality Improvement questions this year as DPP preschools are transitioning from the Qualistar Rating™ system to Colorado Shines ratings and thus it is not possible to assess quality changes. 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 2008-2009, 2009-2010, and 2010-2011 DPP cohorts. Answers to a given evaluation question come from both parents and providers, and were analyzed by demographic sub-categories (e.g., income tier, primary



language spoken at home, child's race/ethnicity, 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.

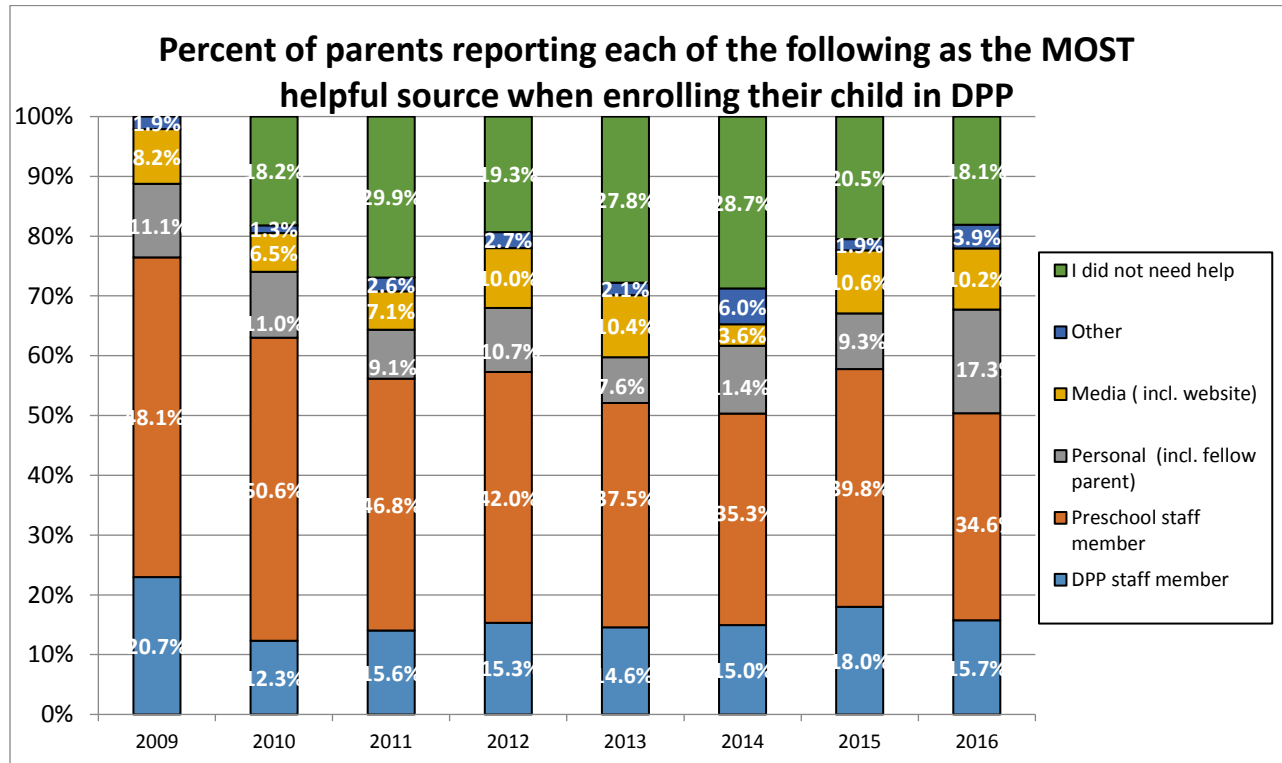


A. Information and Knowledge about DPP Outreach

What do families know about DPP and how accurate is that knowledge?

The number of parents reporting that they don't need any help when enrolling their child in DPP decreased in 2016 for the second consecutive year. As seen in Figure A1, about 35 percent of parents found preschool staff members to be the most helpful source of assistance and 16 percent cited DPP staff members (or contractors) as being the most helpful source. DPP staff members are generally perceived as anyone outside the preschool who can be contacted through DPP's contact information and thus is likely to include DPP's contractor MetrixID who processes paperwork to enroll students in DPP.

Figure A1





As in prior years, in 2016, parents were most likely to report that they first heard about DPP through a personal relationship/experience.

Figure A2

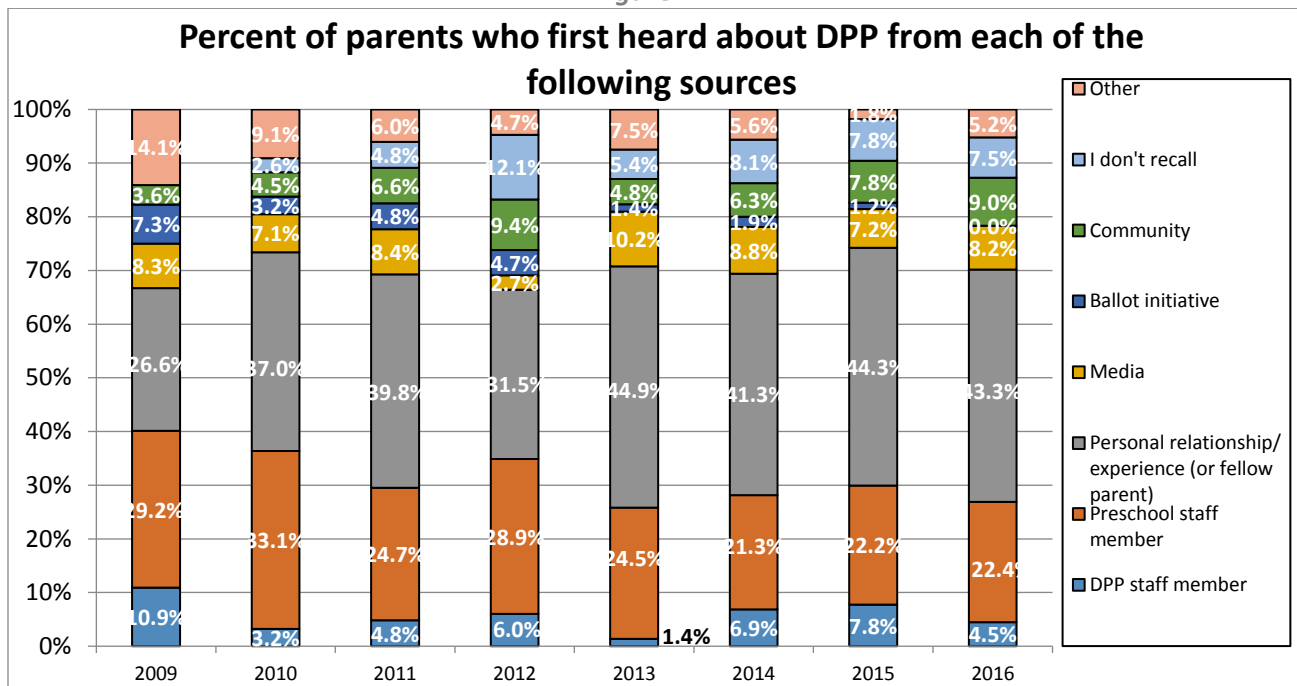
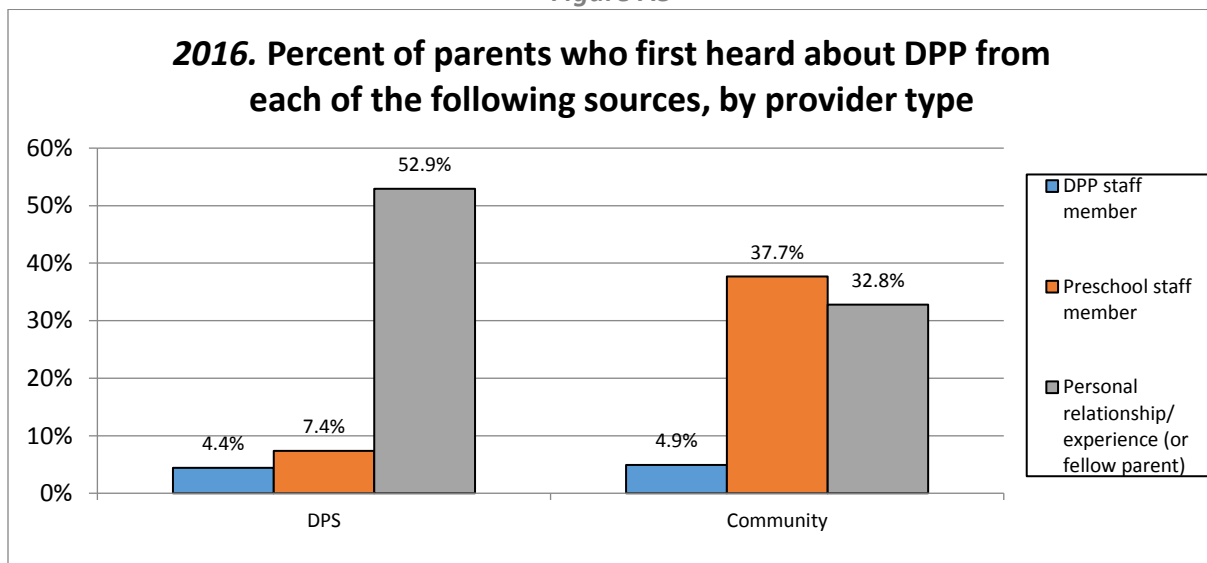


Figure A3 breaks down these data by program type, showing that parents enrolling their children in DPS sites were much more likely to have first heard about DPP from a personal relationship or experience, rather than from a preschool or DPP staff member. In community sites, parents were equally likely to have first heard about DPP from preschool staff members as they were from a personal relationship or experience.

Figure A3



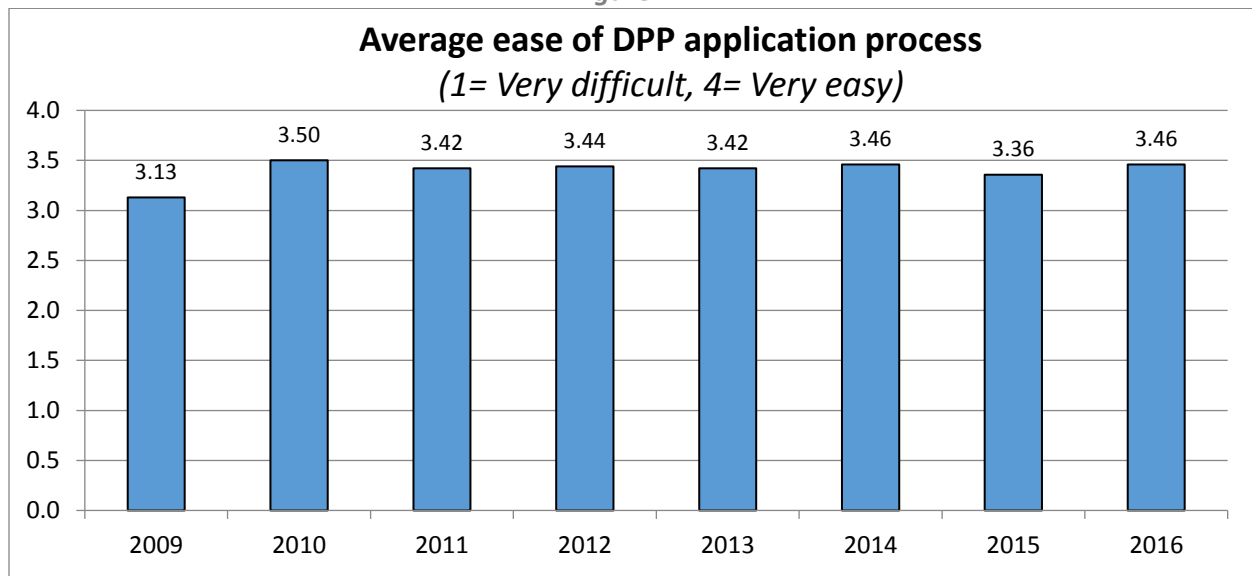


B. Ease of Interaction with DPP

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

Most parents continue to perceive the DPP application process as fairly easy to complete. Figure A4 presents average parent ratings of the DPP application process overall.

Figure A4



After rising in 2015, the percentage of parents seeking assistance as they applied to DPP fell back in 2016. This percent has been highly variable from year to year. In 2016, 21 percent of parents asked for assistance, as displayed in Figure A5. Figure A6 shows that, among those who did seek and receive assistance, they rated the assistance highly.

Figure A5

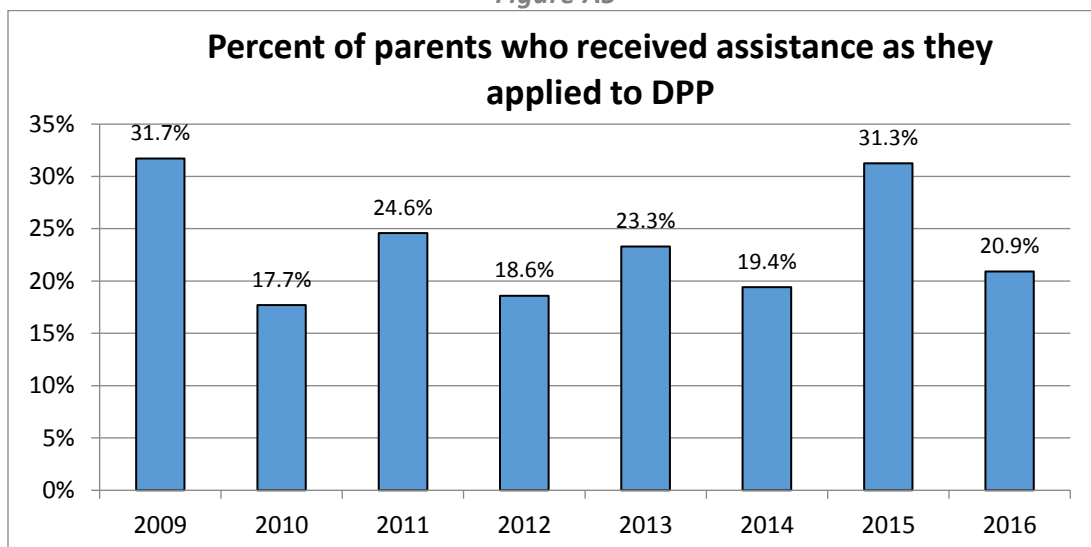
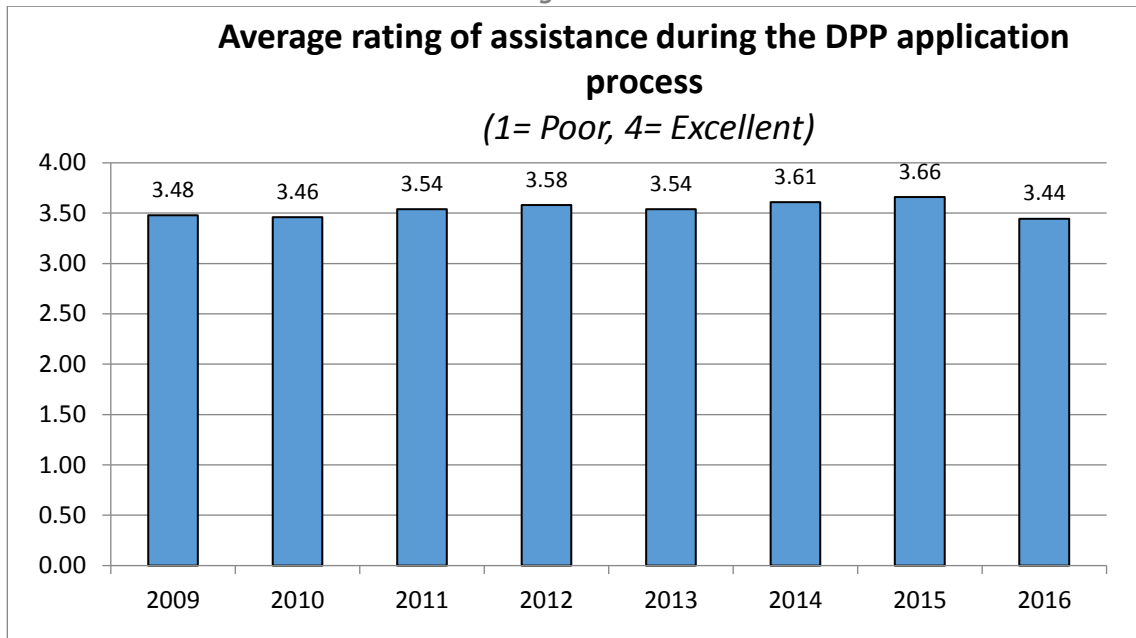




Figure A6



Among providers, just over 35 percent asked for administrative assistance from DPP during the 2016 school year. As shown in Figure A7, this number has been fairly consistent over the past six years. Figure A8 shows that those seeking assistance rated that assistance as useful.

Figure A7

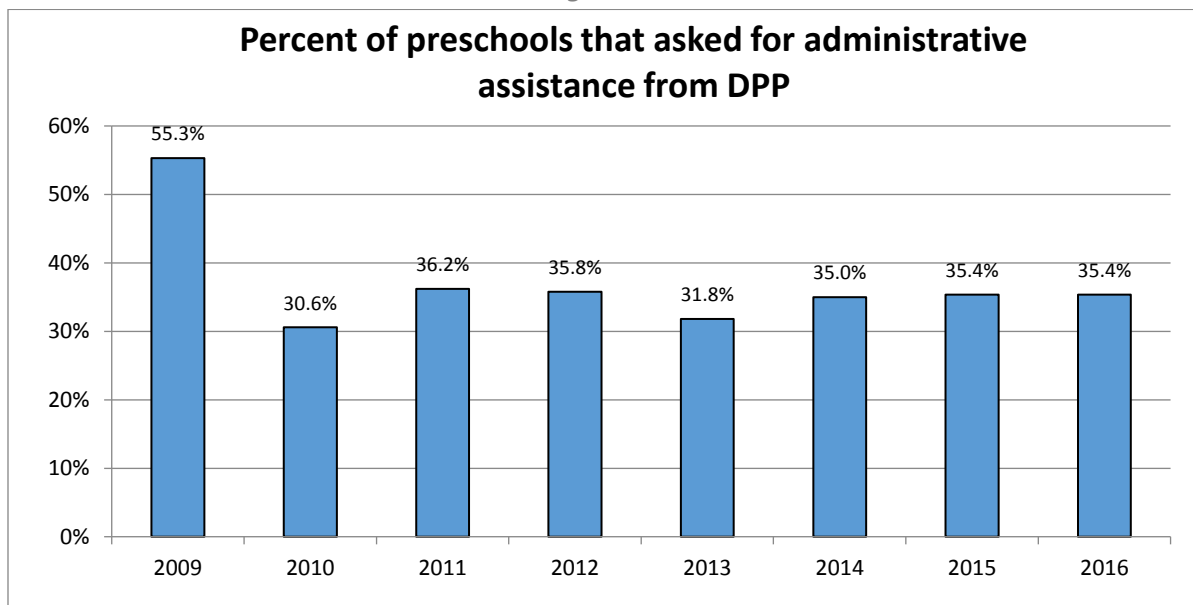
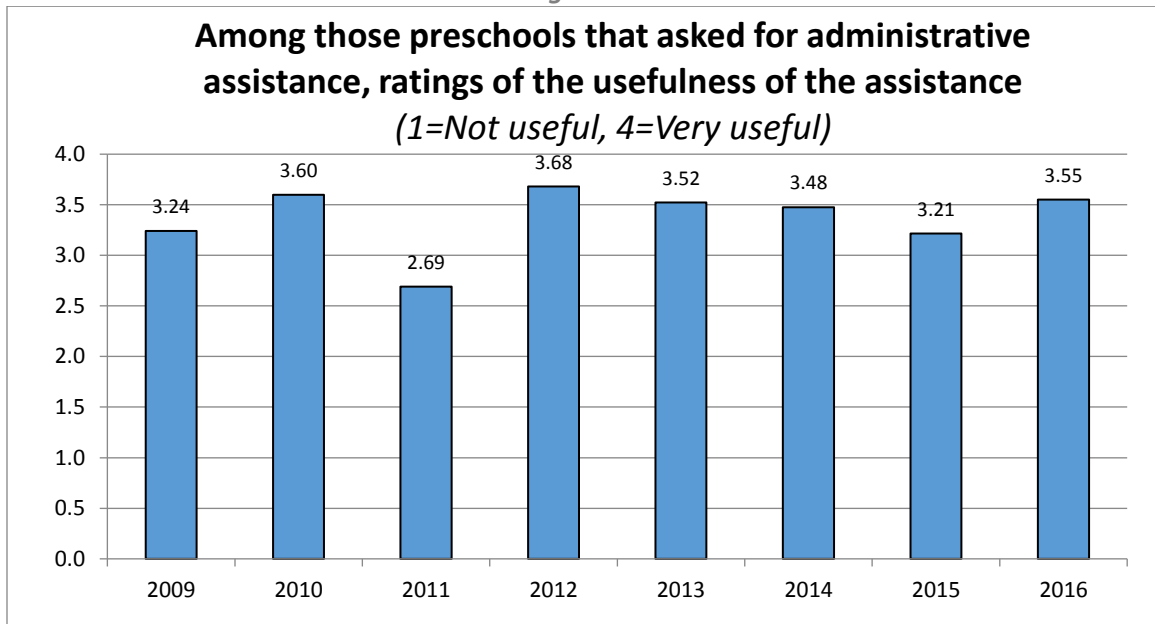


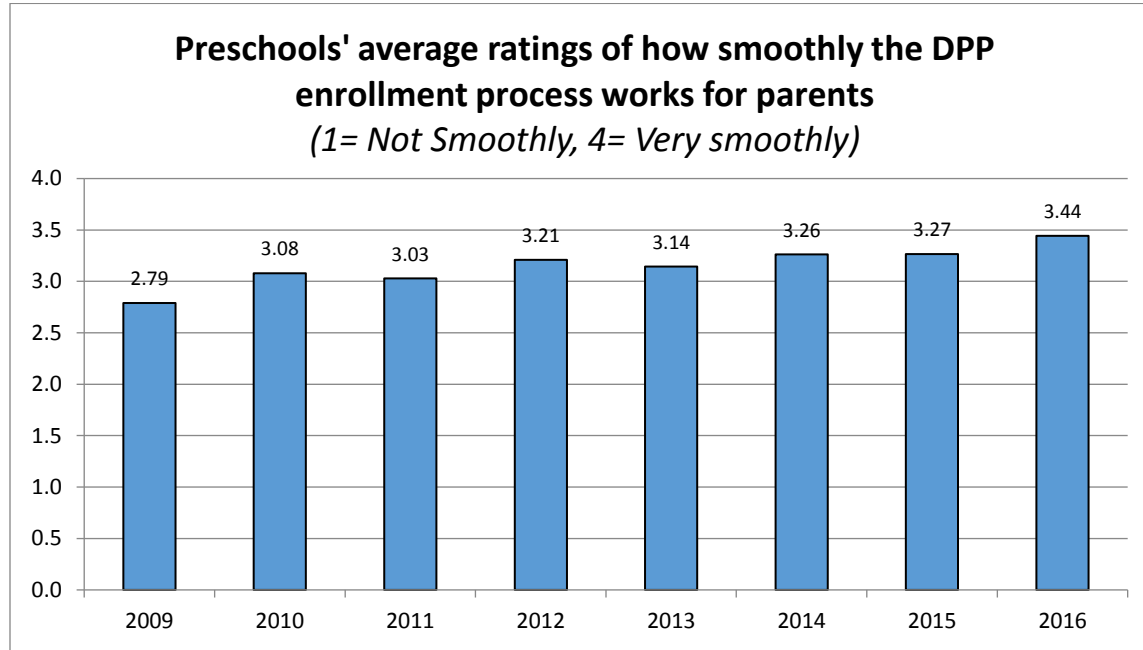


Figure A8



Overall, providers are positive about DPP operations. Provider ratings of the enrollment process continued to be high, as seen in Figure A9. Provider ratings of how smoothly the DPP enrollment process works for parents increased to the highest level to date in 2016.

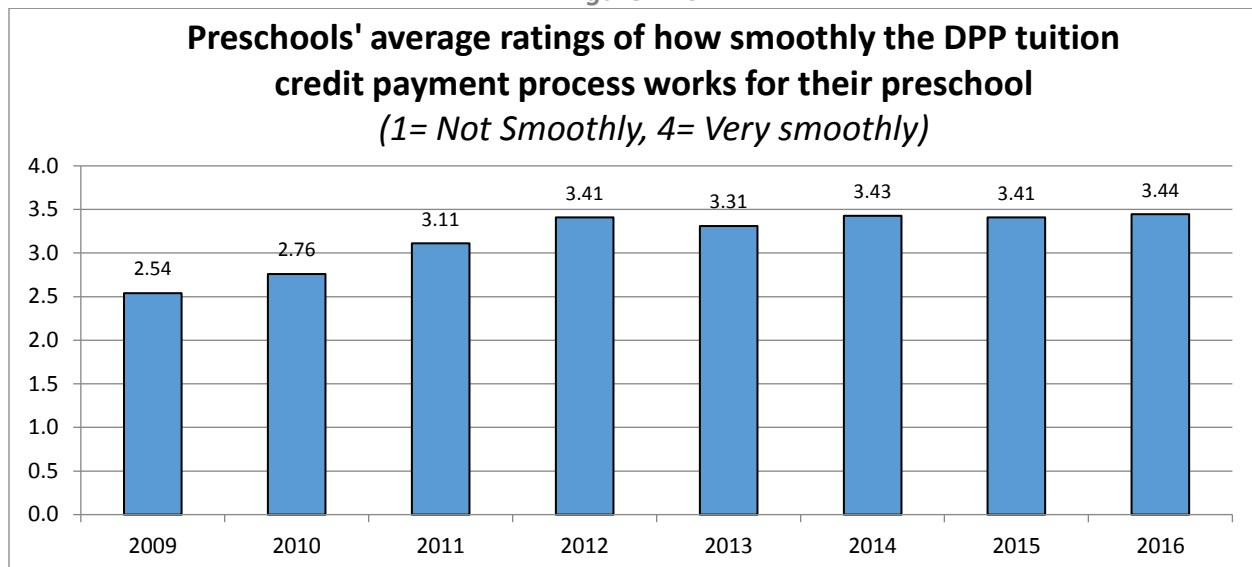
Figure A9





Providers had positive ratings of the smoothness of the DPP tuition credit payment process, with an average rating of 3.44 on a 4 point scale. Figure A10 presents the ratings over time.

Figure A10



Providers reported that payments are generally received in a timely manner (Figure A11), but they also reported that they were still not completely comfortable explaining how the tuition credits are determined, as seen in Figure A12.

Figure A11

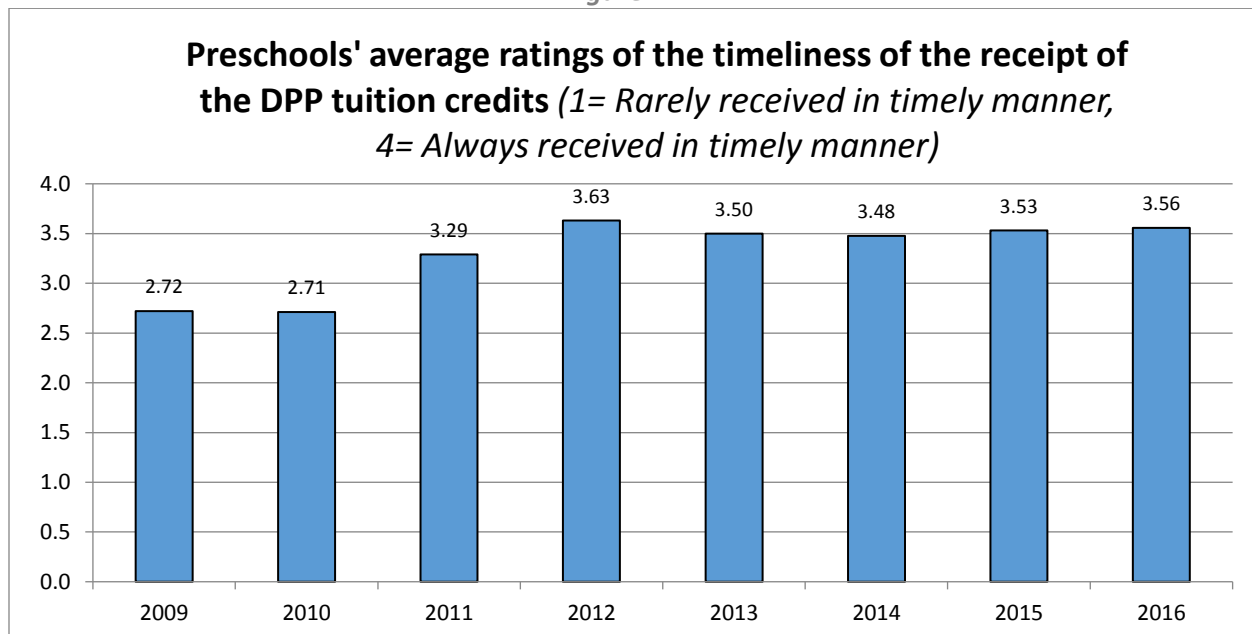
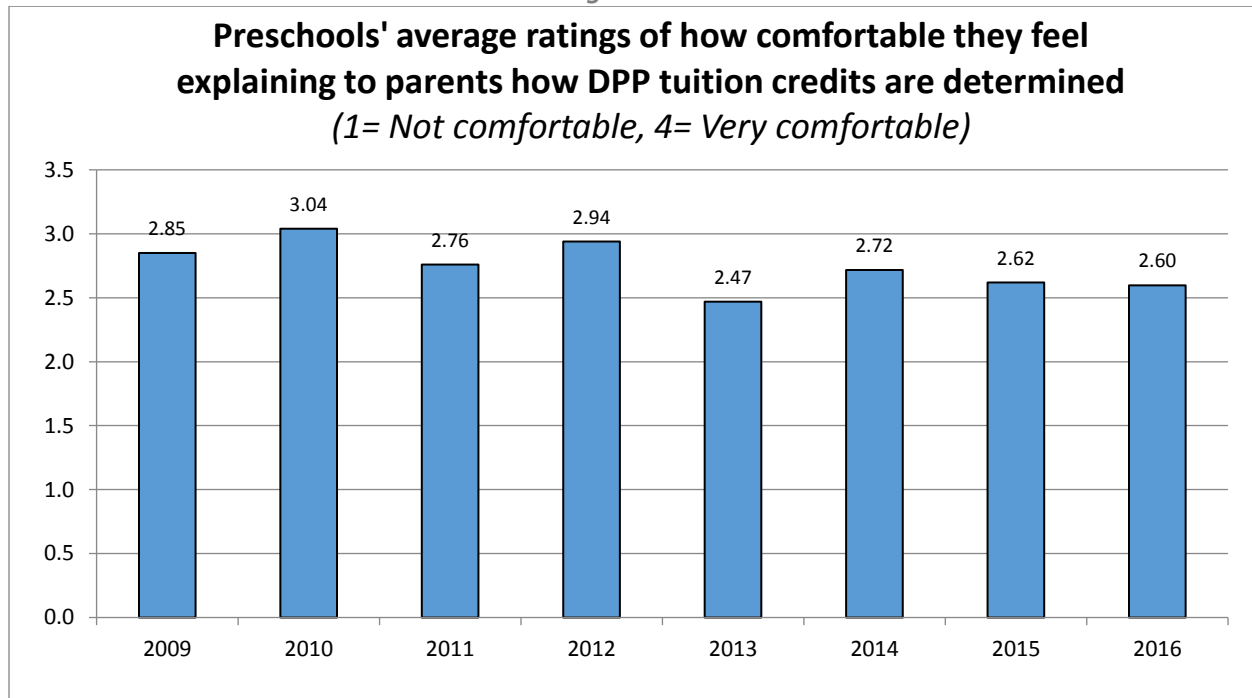


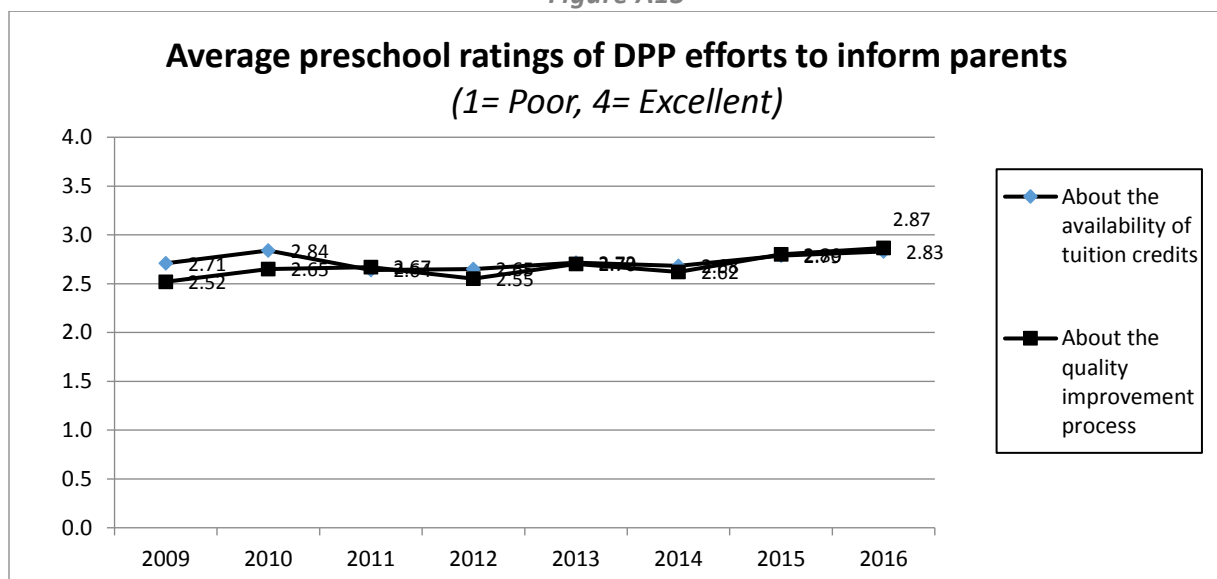


Figure A12



Preschools have consistently rated DPP's efforts to inform parents about the availability of tuition credits and about DPP's quality improvement process as mediocre but needing improvement. Figure A13 presents these average preschool ratings over time.

Figure A13





C. Tuition Credits

Do tuition credits encourage parents from all income levels to send their four-year-old children to high-quality preschools?

The DPP tuition credit appears to influence both the decision to enroll children in preschool and the number of hours of preschool attendance. Figure A14 shows that about one-quarter of parents report that they would not have enrolled their child in preschool without the credit.

Figure A14

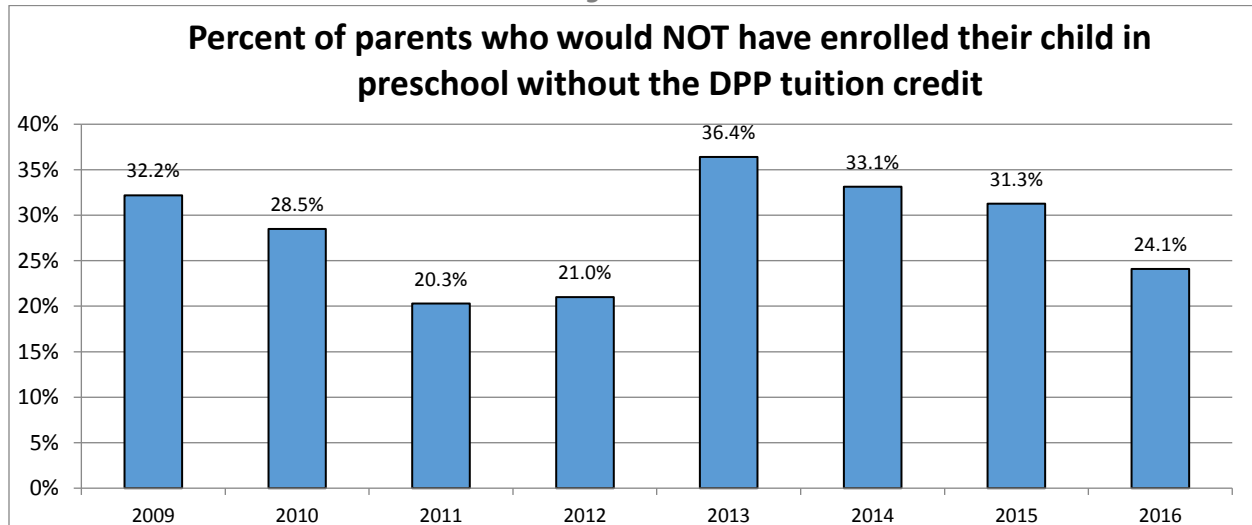
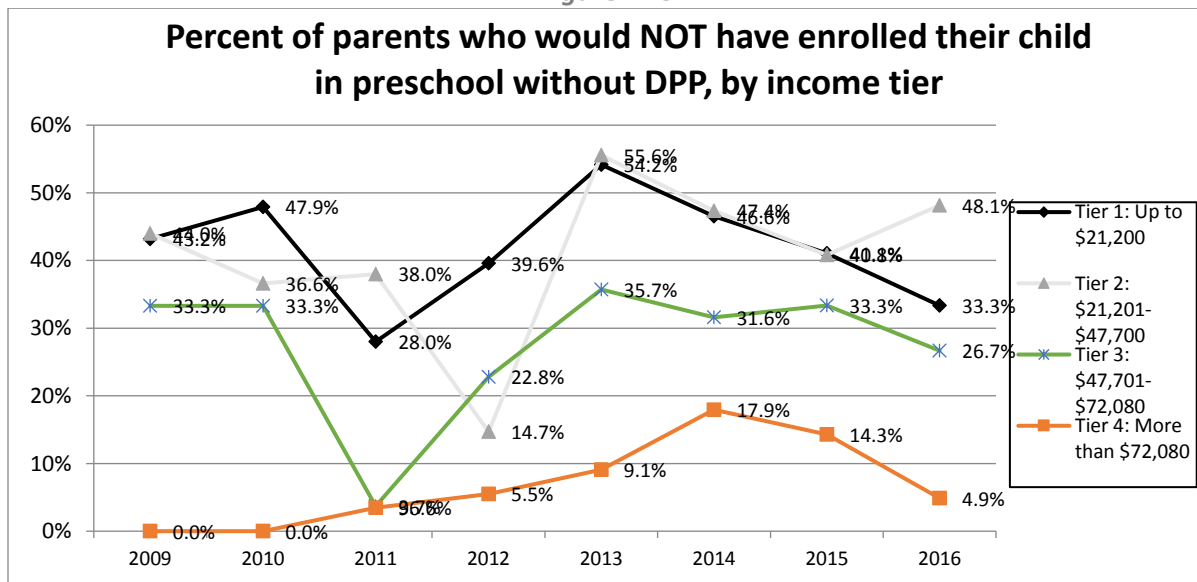


Figure A15 breaks down these data by income tier and illustrates that the lowest-income tier families are more likely to rely on the tuition credit to enroll their child in preschool, compared to the higher-income families.

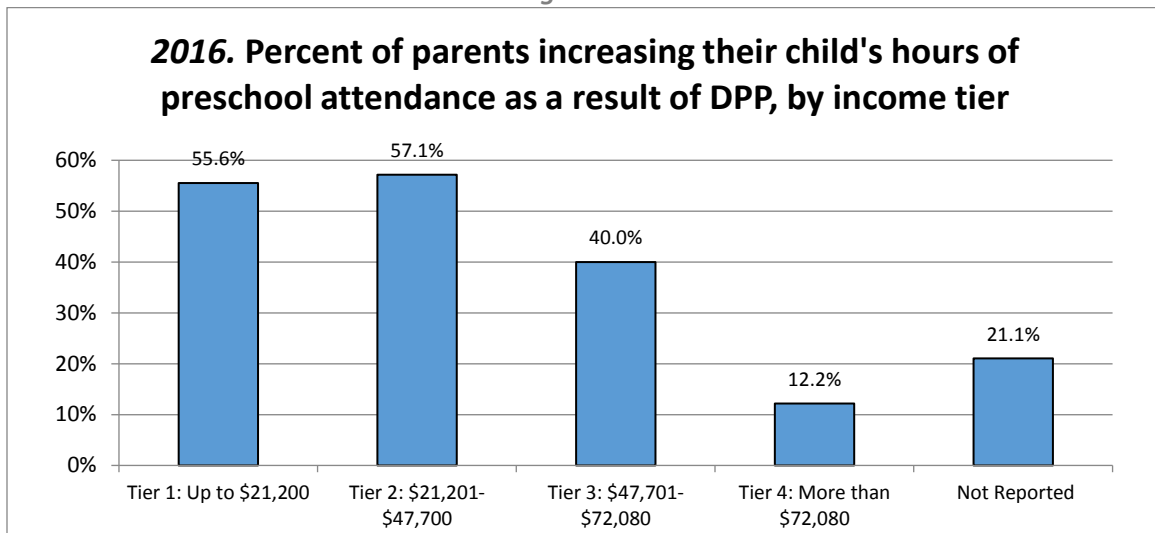
Figure A15





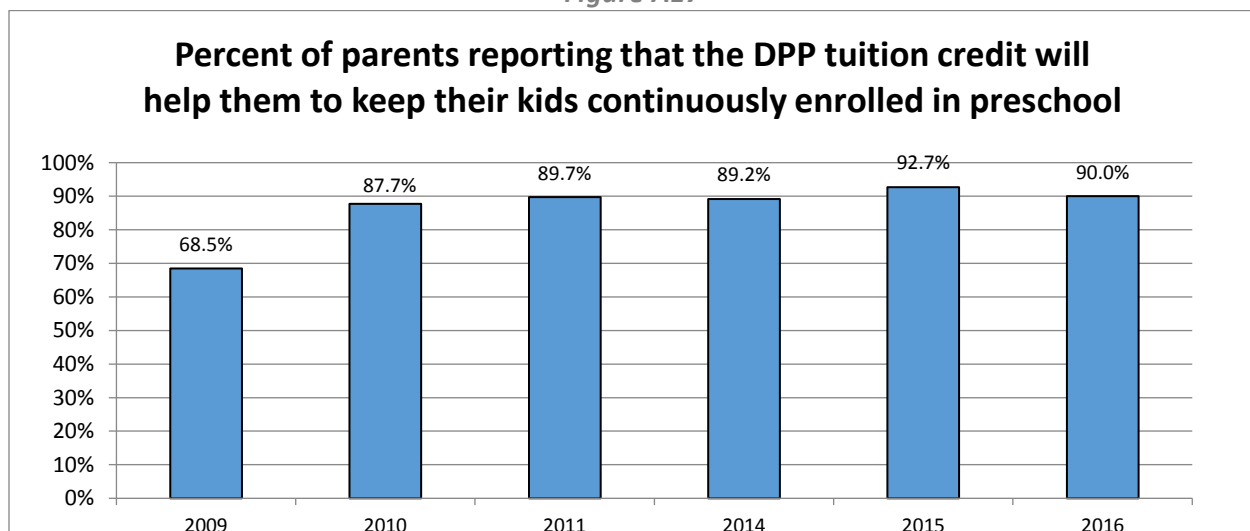
The tuition credit also influences the number of hours children are enrolled in preschool, especially for low-income and black or Hispanic families. Figure A16 shows that over 55 percent of the lowest-income families and over 57 percent of the second-lowest income tier families, increased their child's hours in preschool as a result of the DPP tuition credit.

Figure A16



In addition to helping parents enroll their child in preschool for longer hours, the tuition credit also helps parents keep children continuously enrolled in preschool throughout the year. As shown in Figure A17, ninety percent of parents reported this in 2016.

Figure A17





The tuition credit also has an impact on choice of preschool. As seen in Figure A18, 30 percent of parents reported that the tuition credit influenced their choice of preschool, a 10 percent decrease from 2015. Figure A19 shows that in 2016, the percent of parents reporting that the credit had an impact on their choice of preschool is almost double among parents who would not have enrolled their child without the DPP tuition credit, at 61 percent.

Figure A18

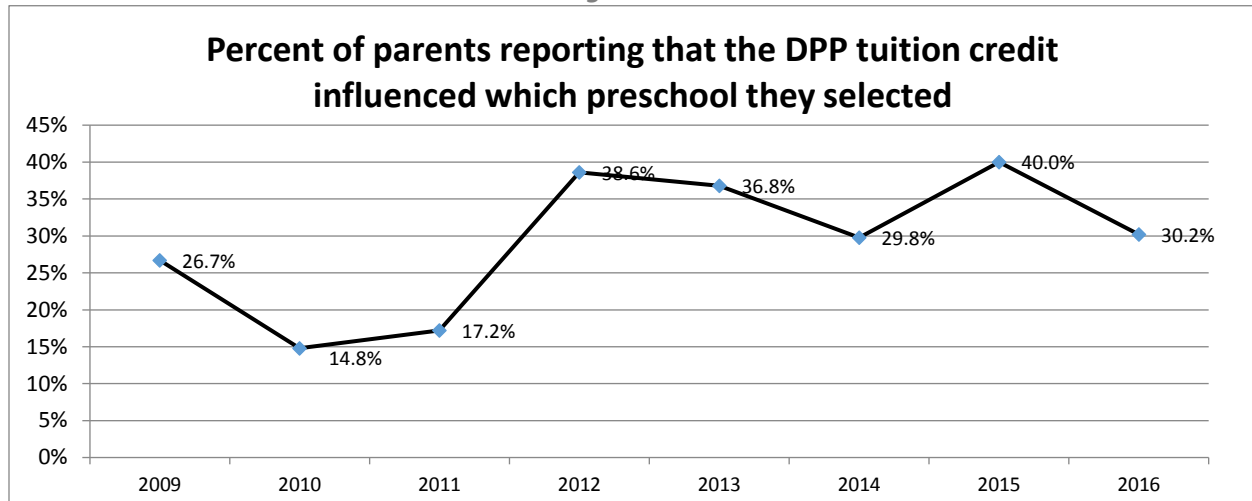
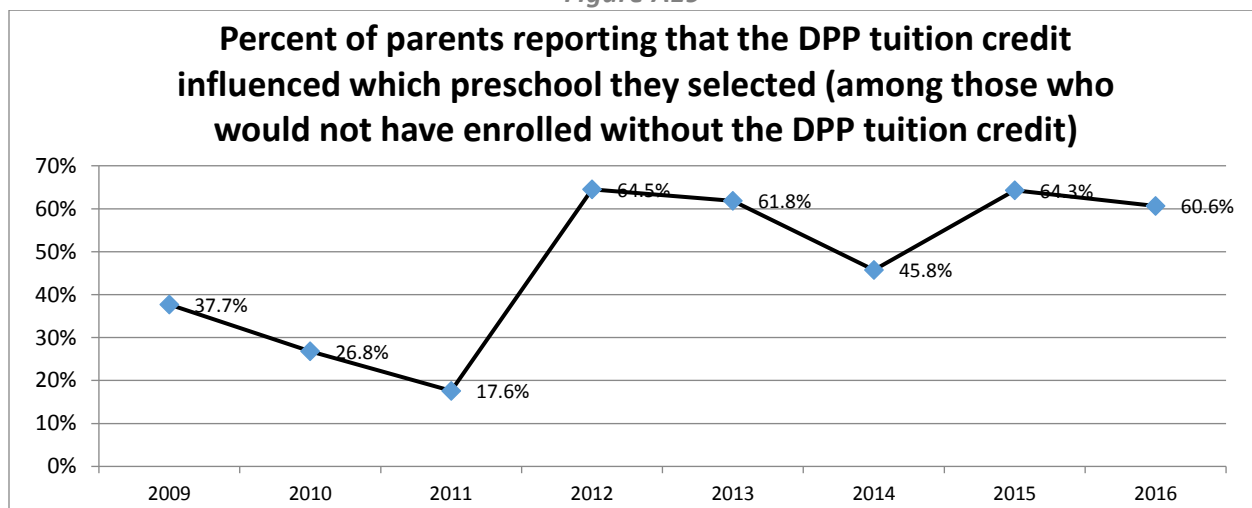


Figure A19





The impact of the tuition credit on preschool choice varies widely by income level and race and ethnicity. As shown in Figure A20, 53 percent of Hispanic families reported that DPP influenced their choice of preschool, compared to 16 percent of white families.

Figure A20

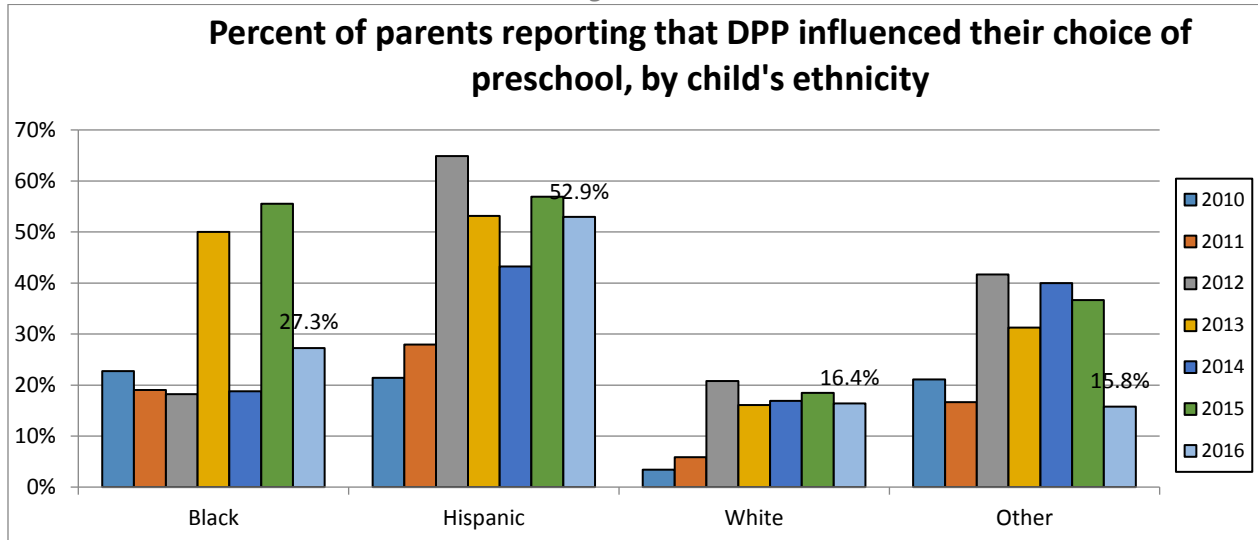
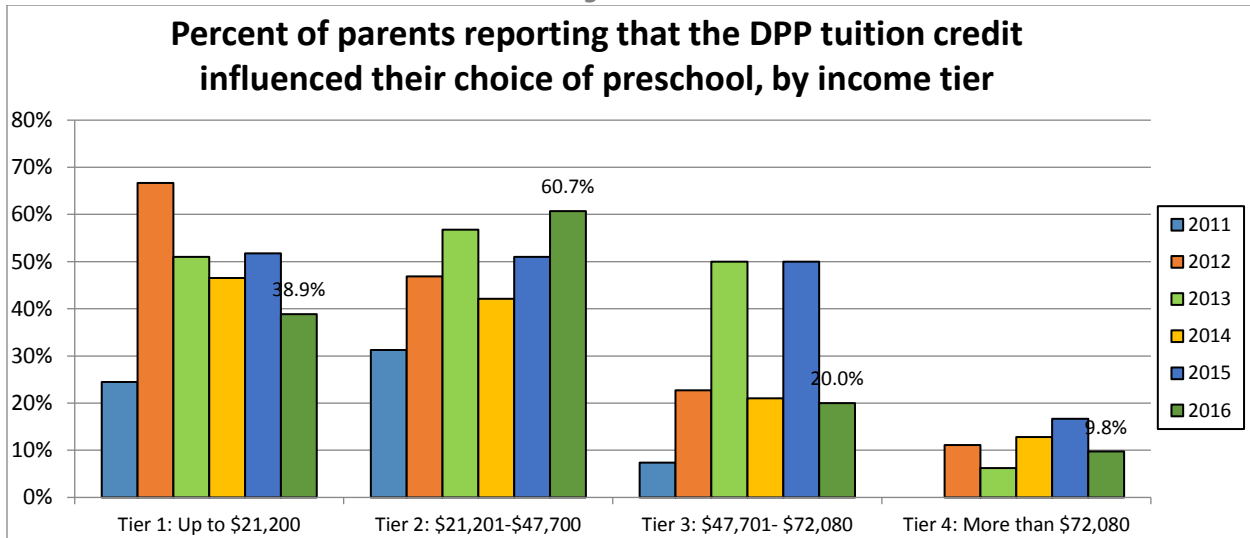


Figure A21 shows that 61 percent of parents in the Tier 2 income category reported that the tuition credit influenced their preschool choice, compared to 10 percent of parents in the highest income category.

Figure A21



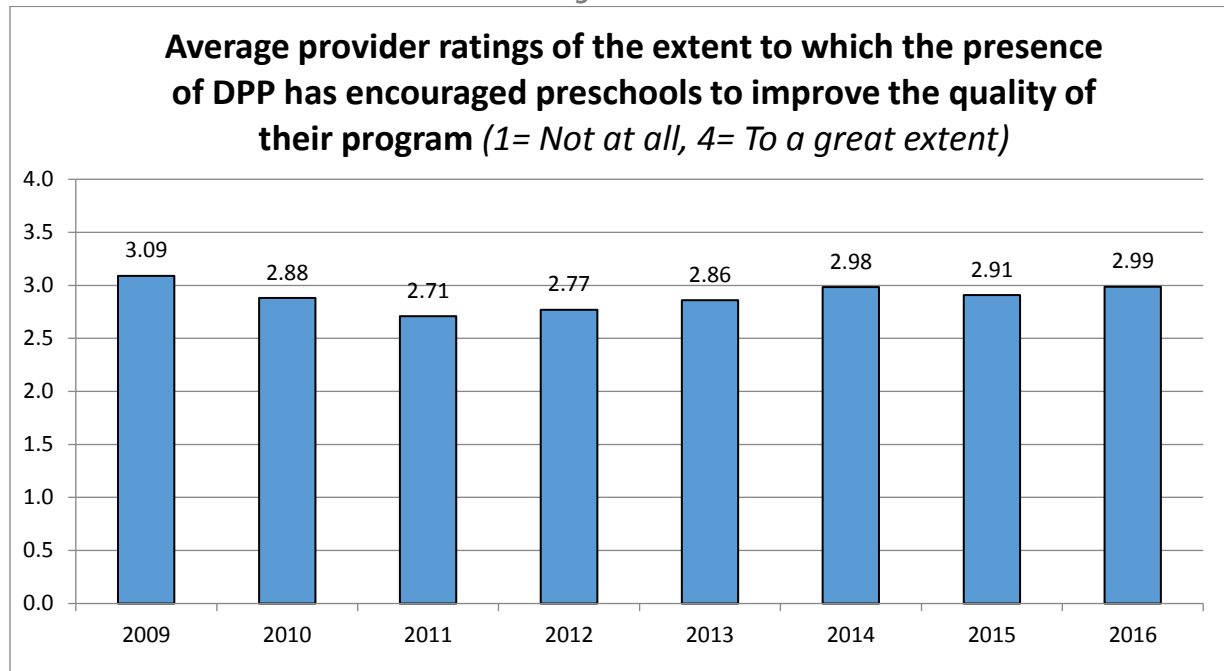


D. Quality Improvement

Do quality improvement resources change the quality of participating preschool programs?

In 2016, providers largely continued to report that the presence of DPP has encouraged them to improve the quality of their program, as shown in Figure A22.

Figure A22





One of the key mechanisms DPP uses to help improve preschool quality in Denver is through its quality improvement (QI) process, which provides resources to providers to improve preschool quality. As shown in Figure A23, nearly 87 percent of providers took advantage of DPP QI resources in 2016.

Figure A23

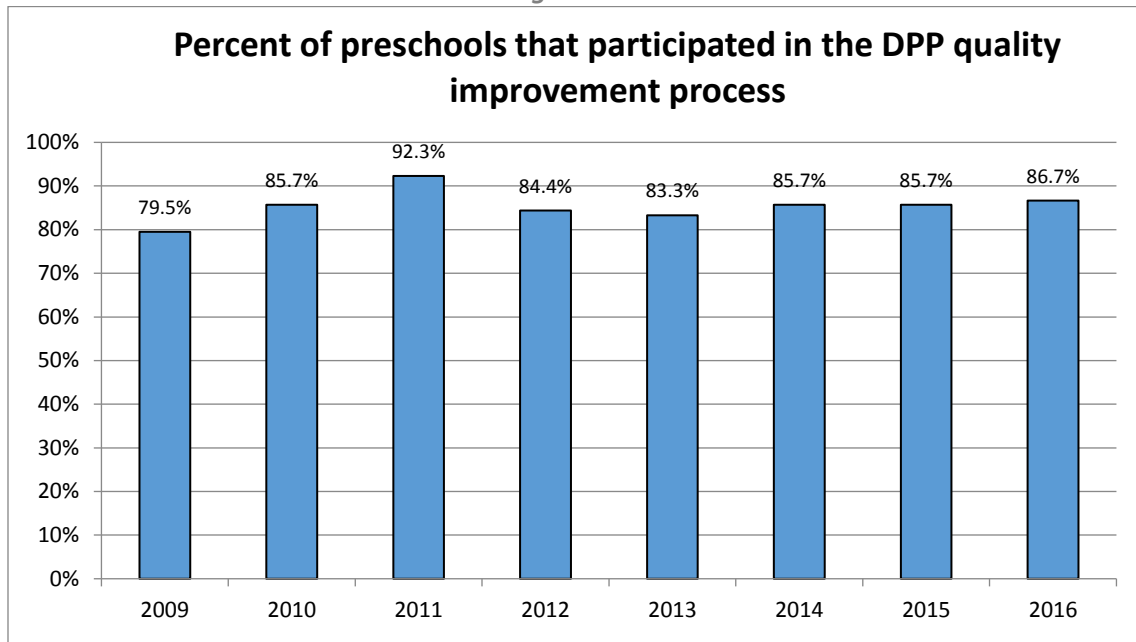
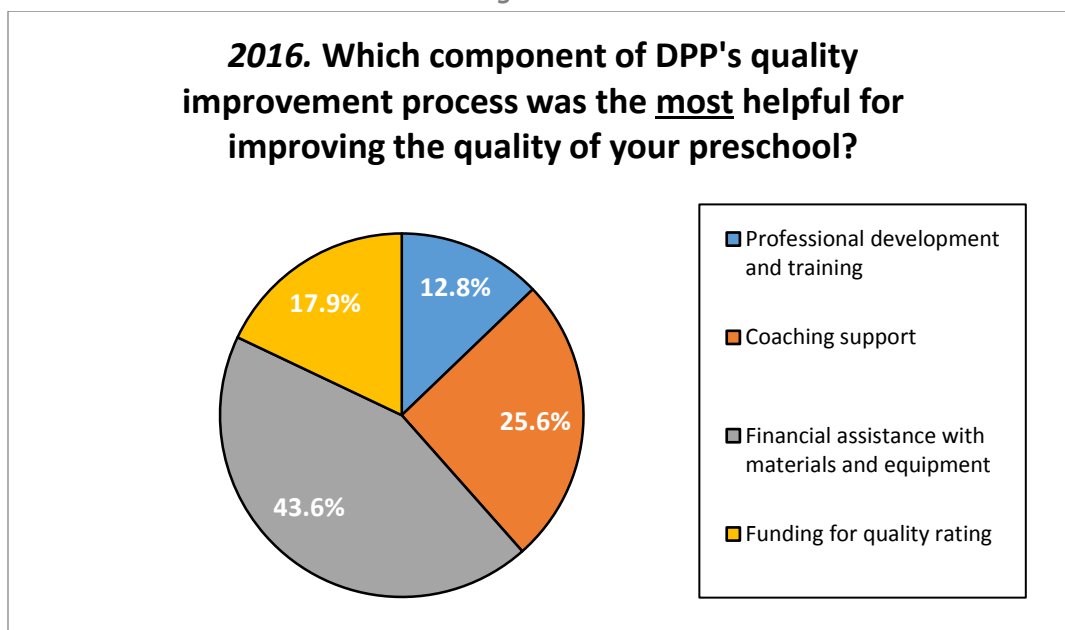


Figure A24 shows that providers find “financial assistance for materials and equipment” the most helpful component for improving the quality of preschool, with “coaching support” and “professional development and training” also rated as very helpful.

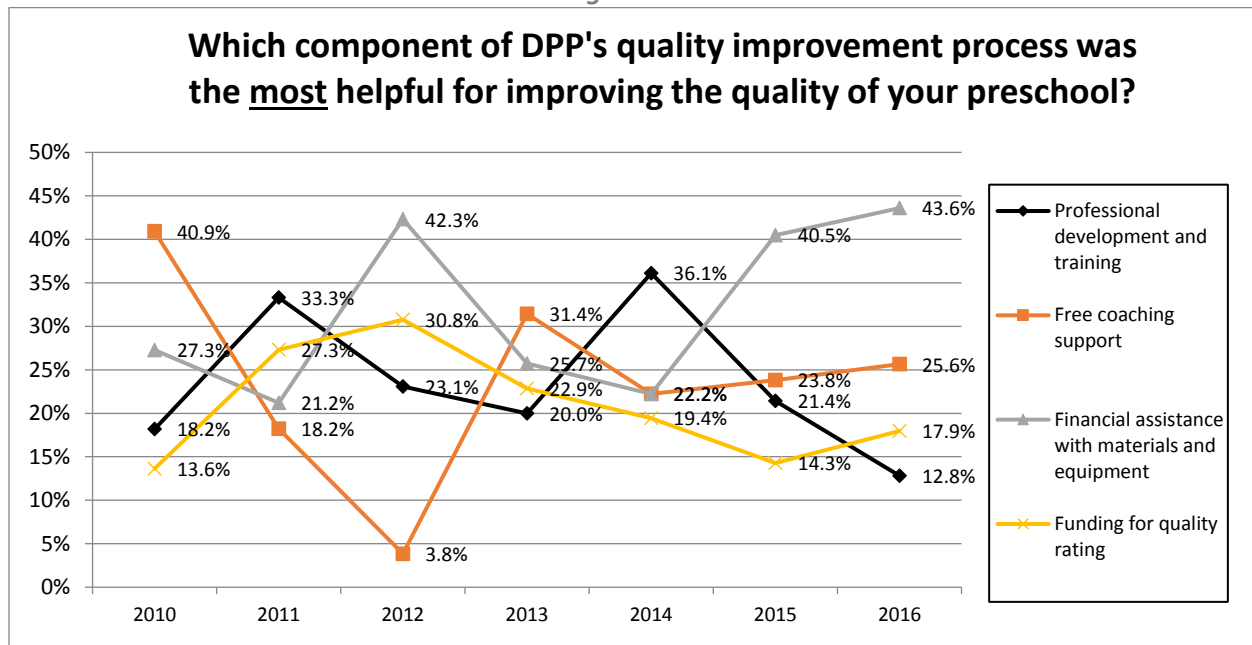
Figure A24





As can be seen in Figure A25, providers' rating of which component was most useful has changed often. In 2012 "financial assistance with materials and equipment" was rated as the most useful by providers; in 2013 "coaching support" was the highest rated; in 2014 "funding for quality rating" was rated highest. In 2015 and 2016, providers once again rated "financial assistance with materials and equipment" as the most helpful component.

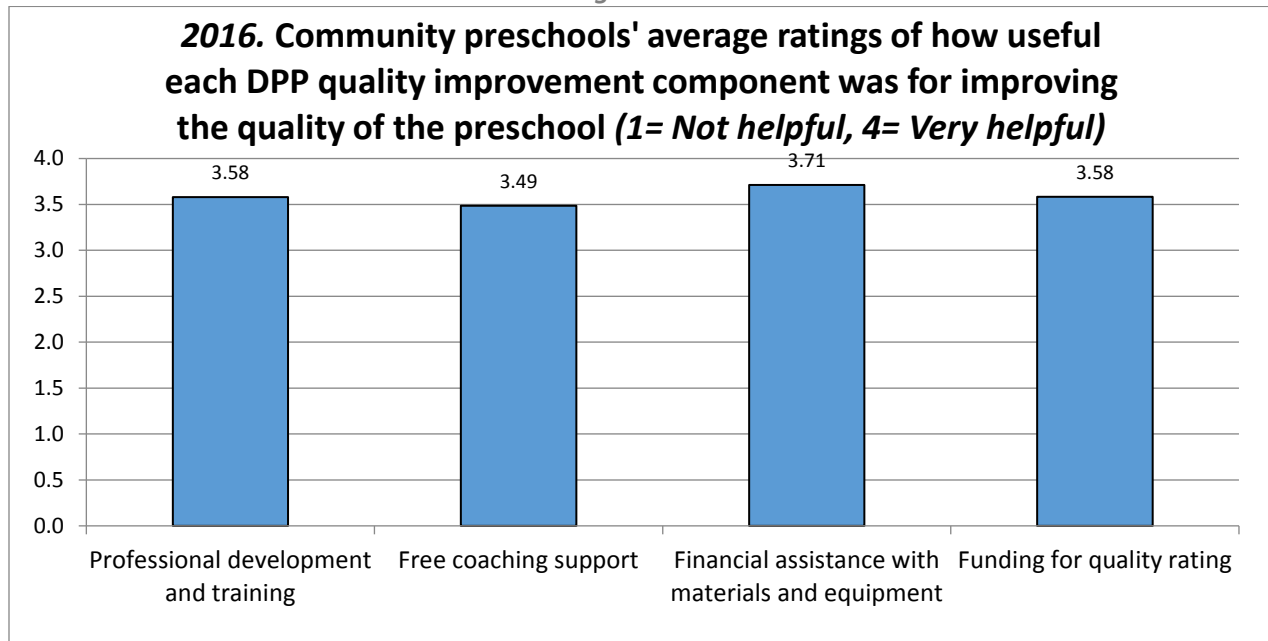
Figure A25





Despite the yearly variation in the ratings of which component was most useful, Figure A26 shows that providers rate all components of the QI process very highly, with all four components receiving a score of 3.4 or higher on a four point scale.

Figure A26



Typically, the annual operations report presents preschool rerating analysis in this section. However, due to the switch to Colorado Shines ratings in 2016, no rating analysis is available this year.



Appendix B: 2016 Parent Survey

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

Please select the **2 MOST IMPORTANT** benefits

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

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colorado Shines rating | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal recommendation(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Qualistar™ rating | <input type="checkbox"/> Perception of quality in the community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accreditation status (National Association for the Education of Young Children: NAEYC) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

3. Do you know the quality rating (Colorado Shines or 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)

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Having a child in preschool makes it possible for parents (one or both) in this family to work | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Having a child in preschool makes it possible for parents (one or both) in this family to work longer hours | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Having a child in preschool makes it possible for parents (one or both) to attend school | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Having a child in preschool provides parents (one or both) with some free time | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

7. How many days per week do you or another member of your household typically read to your child? (select one)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 days |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 day | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 days |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 days | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 days |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 days | <input type="checkbox"/> 7 days |

8. 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"/> Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family member | <input type="checkbox"/> Online advertisement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employer: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Website: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community presentations or literature
(at school/college, church, local event,
recreation center) | <input type="checkbox"/> Preschool Matters Ballot Initiative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doctor's office/health clinic | <input type="checkbox"/> One of my other children participated in DPP |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> I do not recall |

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

- ☐ More than six months before enrolling in preschool
- ☐ Less than 6 months before enrolling in preschool
- ☐ I do not recall

10. 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: _____

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

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



12. How did you submit your DPP application? (select one)

- ☐ Through my child's preschool
☐ Through the mail
☐ By email
☐ By fax
☐ Other: _____

13. How difficult or easy was the DPP application process to complete? (circle one)

Very difficult Very easy
1 2 3 4

14. Did you receive assistance from DPP staff as you completed the application process? (select one)

- ☐ Yes ☐ No (skip to question 15)

14a. If you received assistance from DPP staff, how would you rate the quality of assistance you received? (circle one)

Poor Excellent
1 2 3 4

15. If the DPP tuition credit was **NOT** available, would you have enrolled your child in preschool anyway? (select one)

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

16. Did the availability of the DPP tuition credit influence **which preschool** you selected? (select one)

- ☐ Yes
☐ No (skip to question 16b)

16a. If **yes** to question #16, how important was the tuition credit in your preschool selection decision? (circle one and then skip to question #17)

Not very important Very important
1 2 3 4

16b. If **no** to question #16, would a larger tuition credit have influenced you to enroll your child in a different preschool? (select one)

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I don't know

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

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

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

- ☐ Yes ☐ No (skip to question 19)

18a. If **yes** to question #18, please specify the name of the **prior** preschool/childcare and the city where it is located (include your current preschool/childcare if your child was enrolled there in the previous year).

Preschool/childcare name: _____

City: _____

18b. If **yes** to question #18, please indicate if your child was enrolled in preschool or childcare (at all) at each of the following ages: (select all that apply)

Check boxes to indicate enrollment each year

- ☐ Under 1 year old
☐ 1 year old
☐ 2 years old
☐ 3 years old
☐ 4 years old



19. As long as your family's income and family size stay 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

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

<input type="checkbox"/> Email	<input type="checkbox"/> Mail	<input type="checkbox"/> Via the preschool
<input type="checkbox"/> Text message	<input type="checkbox"/> Twitter	<input type="checkbox"/> DPP website
<input type="checkbox"/> Telephone	<input type="checkbox"/> Facebook	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

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

Yes No

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

Email address: _____

Phone #: _____



Appendix C: 2016 Provider Survey (Community Sites)

Below is the provider survey administered to the community sites beginning on the following page. The survey page numbers are independent of the pagination in this report. The report pagination will continue with Appendix D.

Denver Preschool Program Survey

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

Preschool Information

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

* 2. Preschool (site) name:

* 3. Preschool address:

4. Your name:

* 5. What is your email address?

* 6. What is your direct work telephone number?

* 7. What is your current job title at this preschool site?

* 8. How long have you been employed in your current position at this preschool site?

* 9. In the past year, which of the following has your preschool experienced? (select all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> High teacher turnover | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher dissatisfaction with professional development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New leadership (principal, director, or lead ECE teacher) | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher dissatisfaction with compensation or benefits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Low student enrollment | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher dissatisfaction with schedule |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prolonged staffing vacancies | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Large changes in income or expenses | |

* 10. 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) | |

* 11. 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

* 12. Has DPP affected your preschool's enrollment numbers?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No (skip to #15)
☐ I do not know (skip to #15)

DPP Enrollment Numbers

* 13. Please indicate whether one or more 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"/>

* 14. 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"/>

DPP Enrollment Numbers

15. How many preschool students (DPP and non-DPP) in their last year before kindergarten are currently enrolled in your preschool?

16. How often does your preschool communicate with DPS preschools about open preschool slots that may be available at your preschool?

- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Never
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Frequently

Interest in Program

* 17. 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

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

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (skip to #21)
- ☐ I do not know (skip to #21)

DPP Enrollment Patterns

* 19. 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"/>

* 20. 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

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

- ☐ 1: Poor ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4: Excellent

22. How could DPP better inform parents about the availability of DPP tuition credits?

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

- ☐ 1: Poor ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4: Excellent

24. How could DPP better inform parents about its DPP quality improvement process?

Parent Decisions about Preschool

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

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

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

* 27. 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

* 28. 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

Qualified teachers (e.g., experienced, well-educated)

Positive interactions between students and teachers

High quality facility, materials, and/or equipment

Safety

Substantial parent involvement

Diversity (of students and/or staff)

Class size or student-to-staff ratio

Other

Parent Recruitment

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

☐ Yes

☐ No (skip to #33)

Parent Recruitment

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

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

31. What do you see as the existing barriers to parents applying for DPP tuition credits?

* 32. Since the beginning of this school year, how much time has your preschool staff spent per month assisting parents with DPP paperwork?

- ☐ No time
- ☐ 1-5 hours
- ☐ 6-10 hours
- ☐ 11-15 hours
- ☐ More than 15 hours

Logistics

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

- ☐ No time
- ☐ 1-5 hours
- ☐ 6-10 hours
- ☐ 11-15 hours
- ☐ More than 15 hours

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

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

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

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

* 36. Does your preschool receive the DPP tuition credits in a timely manner?

☐ 1: Rarely ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4: Always

* 37. 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

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

☐ Yes
☐ No (skip to #41)

DPP Assistance

* 39. What type of assistance did you request?

* 40. How useful was the assistance?

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

Quality Improvement

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

☐ Yes
☐ No (skip to #45)

DPP Quality Improvement Process

* 42. How helpful were each of the following DPP quality improvement processes for improving the quality of your preschool?

	1: Not helpful	2	3	4: Very helpful	Not applicable
Coaching support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Funding for quality rating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional development and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial assistance with materials and equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

43. If your preschool has participated in a CLASS observation, please explain how this observation was or was not useful in informing your preschool's quality improvement decisions.

* 44. Which component of DPP's quality improvement process was the MOST helpful for improving the quality of your preschool? (Please answer, then skip to #46)

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

DPP Quality Improvement Process

* 45. Please explain the reason(s) your preschool did not participate in the DPP quality improvement process?

Quality Ratings

* 46. 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"/>

47. 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

* 48. 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

Concerns

* 49. 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)

* 50. 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

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

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

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

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

* 53. 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

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

Suggestions and Comments

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

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

56. Do you have any suggestons for improving DPP in the future?

* 57. Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up phone call regarding your preschool's experience with DPP?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

58. 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 on surveys and face-to-face focus group meetings and telephone interviews with parents and providers.

The data collection strategies since 2008-09 relied more heavily on surveys, and less on face-to-face focus group meetings and telephone interviews with parents and providers. For the 2015-16 school year, eight full years of collected parent and provider survey data allows APA to present trends in the survey results. For the purpose of presenting these 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; the 2012-13 school year is referred to as 2013; the 2013-14 school year is referred to as 2014; the 2014-15 school year is referred to as 2015; and the 2015-16 school year is referred to as 2016.

In 2016, information was obtained from surveys, analysis of DPP enrollment data, provider data, and DPS TCAP data. The evaluation team analyzed 145 completed surveys from a sample of parents and 84 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 represent children enrolled in DPP as of November 2015, 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 race/ethnicity, see Appendix F.

Table E1 portrays the breakdown of children by race/ethnicity and family income tier. The largest race/ethnic group of children enrolled in DPP was Hispanic. Consistent with prior years, in 2016 nearly two-thirds (63.6 percent) of DPP families reported incomes of \$47,700 or less.

Table E1

All 2016 DPP Families by Income Tier and Child's Race/ethnicity						
	Income tier					
Child's ethnicity	Up to \$21,200	\$21,201-\$47,700	\$47,701-\$72,080	More than \$72,080	Not Reported	Totals
Black	6.6%	4.4%	0.9%	0.5%	0.2%	12.6%
Hispanic	18.4%	17.4%	3.9%	2.7%	1.1%	43.5%
White	3.2%	3.7%	3.9%	12.8%	5.0%	28.5%
Other	3.3%	3.1%	1.2%	2.2%	0.8%	10.5%
Not Reported	2.3%	1.2%	0.5%	0.6%	0.3%	4.8%
Totals	33.8%	29.8%	10.4%	18.7%	7.3%	100.0%

The 2015 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 10 additional parents to ensure results were representative of the DPP population. By adding these 10 parents to the surveyed total, the sample was broadly representative of the population by income, child's race/ethnicity, home language, and the DPP CDHS rating of preschools where the children were enrolled.

In 2016, APA sent surveys to a total of 210 parents and received 145 completed surveys from these parents. This response rate of 69 percent was down somewhat from 2015. Table E2 shows the returned parent surveys broken down by race/ethnicity and income level.



Table E2

2016 Returned DPP Surveys by Income Tier and Child's Race/ethnicity						
	Income tier					
Child's race/ethnicity	Up to \$21,200	\$21,201-\$47,700	\$47,701-\$72,080	More than \$72,080	Not Reported	Totals
Black	5.5%	1.4%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	7.6%
Hispanic	13.1%	13.8%	2.8%	4.1%	2.8%	36.6%
White	3.4%	3.4%	6.2%	18.6%	9.0%	40.7%
Other	2.8%	2.1%	0.7%	6.2%	1.4%	13.1%
Not Reported	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	2.1%
Totals	26.2%	20.7%	10.3%	29.7%	13.1%	100.0%

Description of Provider Sample

DPP continues to recruit and enroll preschool providers on an ongoing basis. The data presented in this section represent preschools that were enrolled in DPP as of November 2015, 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 DPP CDHS rating. DPS preschools represent just under 33 percent of all DPP preschool sites. Community home-based sites comprise about 6 percent of all DPP sites and 62 percent of DPP sites are community center-based sites. Approximately 78 percent of the preschool sites in 2016 had between 1 and 5 DPP classrooms. More than half (53 percent) of DPP sites had received a DPP CDHS rating of 4 or 5 on the 5-point scale.



Table E3

All 2016 DPP Providers	
Provider type	
DPS	32.5%
Community Center-Based Sites	62.0%
Community Home-Based Sites	5.5%
Total Number of Classrooms	
1 or 2 classrooms	41.2%
3-5 classrooms	36.9%
6-9 classrooms	16.1%
10 or more classrooms	5.9%
DPP CDHS Quality Rating	
1 star	6.8%
2 stars	15.2%
3 stars	24.8%
4 stars	49.6%
5 stars	3.6%
Grand Total	100.0%

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, DPP CDHS ratings, and location (zip code). In January 2016, there were 7 providers enrolled in DPP that operated more than one preschool site (excluding DPS). These 7 providers operate 24 preschools in total and we sent surveys to 7 of these preschools in a provider network.

Of the 100 preschools surveyed, 84 returned surveys, for a response rate of 84 percent, up from 82 percent in 2015. Both the surveyed preschools and the preschools that returned surveys were generally representative of the overall population of DPP preschools. Table E4 presents the distribution of preschools that returned surveys.

*Table E4*

All 2016 Provider Returned Surveys	
Provider type	
DPS	44.0%
Community Center-Based Sites	46.4%
Community Home-Based Sites	9.5%
Total number of Classrooms	
1 or 2 classrooms	39.3%
3-5 classrooms	39.3%
6-9 classrooms	15.5%
10 or more classrooms	6.0%
DPP CDHS Quality Rating	
1 star	6.1%
2 stars	15.9%
3 stars	19.5%
4 stars	53.7%
5 stars	4.9%
Grand Total	100.0%



Appendix F: Description of Demographic Recoding

Table F1

Coding of Child's Ethnicity	
Coded Race/Ethnicity Category	Included in Category
Black	African American; Black
Hispanic	Hispanic, Latino
White	White; White (Not of Hispanic origin); Caucasian
Other	Other; Asian or Pacific Islander; Native American or Alaska Native; Bi or Multi-racial; mixed race; any combination of more than one ethnicity such as black/white
Not Reported	Not provided; Missing data

Table F2

Coding of Home Language	
Coded Home Language Category	Included in Category
English	English
Spanish	Spanish
Other	Other; Not Reported; any language other than English or Spanish. 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.	