

Executive Summary



High quality early learning experiences provide a lifetime of benefits for Colorado’s children. Through strong partnerships with districts and communities, the Colorado Department of Education delivers results for our first of four departmental strategic goals: Start Strong. The department has made a commitment to help provide quality early learning to build an academic foundation that will lead to success through high school graduation and beyond.

The annual Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) Legislative Report provides highlights about the implementation and effectiveness of the Colorado Preschool Program (CPP). The 2017 report shows that increased funding from the legislature has led to more children being able to access high quality programs with trained instructors, producing better outcomes for at-risk children who would have likely struggled without the intervention.

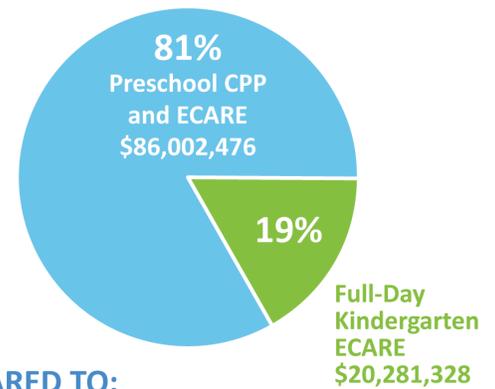
Colorado Preschool Program is a state-funded early childhood education program administered by CDE that focuses on at-risk children who are likely to start elementary school unprepared for academic success. The program provides funding to school districts to offer half-day or full-day programming to eligible children through the Public School Finance Act. Per pupil funding increased to \$3,748 over 2014-2015.

In 2013 and 2014 the legislature expanded the program through the Early Childhood At-Risk Enhancement (ECARE) program. The increase meant 8,200 more young children were eligible for half- or full-day kindergarten.



COLORADO
Department of Education

Total CPP Funding: \$106,283,804



COMPARED TO:

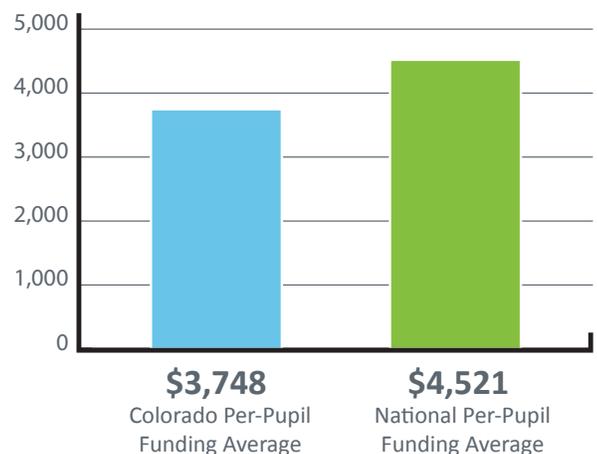
\$6.129 Billion: The total Colorado funding for K-12

\$3,748: The Colorado average for preschool spending per slot

\$4,521: The national average of state preschool spending per slot

(Source: The State of Preschool 2015, National Institute of Early Education Research)

Preschool Funding State vs. National Average



Executive Summary Cont.

Key findings in this report include:

- Four year olds in CPP in 2015-16 showed impressive growth from fall to spring in six overall developmental domains and across several disaggregated categories. However, the data show significant disparities exist across race, gender and ethnicity.
- Significant reading deficiency rates for CPP graduates are on average significantly lower than their at-risk peers who didn't attend publicly funded preschool.

54

THE NUMBER OF
SCHOOL DISTRICTS WITH
PROGRAM RATINGS
OF 3, 4 OR 5



- CPP graduates are significantly less likely to be held back in kindergarten through third grade compared to their at-risk peers who did not attend publicly funded preschool, resulting in reduced overall cost to taxpayers.
- CPP graduates are more likely to meet or exceed expectations in most subject areas on statewide Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) assessments, compared to their at-risk peers who did not attend publicly funded preschool.
- In 2015-16, 54 school districts had at least one CPP-funded program rated between a 3 and a 5 (on a 1-5 scale) on the Colorado Shines quality rating system.
- Investing early saves money down the road. CPP graduates are significantly less likely to be held back in grades K-3 compared to similar at-risk children who did not attend publicly funded preschool. The difference is most dramatic in first grade where CPP graduates have about one-third lower chance of being held back. While high-quality preschool requires a significant up-front investment, it is often less costly than retaining students. Retention costs an extra year's worth of per-pupil spending as Colorado taxpayers foot the bill for remediation.

The research and data support the conclusion that with a strong start in the early years of learning, students will have a better opportunity to succeed all the way through high school graduation and beyond. The Colorado Preschool Program works.