



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Denver Preschool Program Releases Evaluation Report** *Data show DPP students are ready for kindergarten*

For the first time, the [Denver Preschool Program](#) (DPP) is releasing the results of its evaluation report and the data indicate the program is working. In less than four years, DPP has grown from a successful ballot initiative into an important, quality presence in preschool education in the city of Denver. DPP provides tuition credits to Denver families for preschool and quality improvement grants to preschool providers to help improve their programs.

The evaluation data show that a majority of children enrolled in DPP leave the program academically, socially and emotionally ready for kindergarten. Results from standardized assessment tests show that nearly three-quarters of DPP children scored at average or above on literacy and math assessments. DPP students did better than what would be expected among children during the “normal development” of a child, regardless of preschool enrollment.

The data also show that DPP students present more positive behaviors in the classroom than when they started their DPP year. Teachers examined students in the fall and in the spring. Over the course of their preschool year, teachers reported that DPP children demonstrated significantly more protective factors, such as initiative, self-control, and attachment and fewer behavioral concerns than when they began preschool in DPP programs in the fall. Experts agree that positive socioemotional development is an important aspect of school readiness ([Rhode Island KIDS COUNT](#), 2005). Children who demonstrate positive behaviors are better able to learn and get along with their classmates.

“We are so proud of the program,” said Eileen Piper, acting chief executive officer of the Denver Preschool Program. “Our data proves it: early childhood education really makes a difference. DPP kids are better prepared for kindergarten and DPP quality grants are helping providers improve their programs.”

The evaluation found that the vast majority (89.5%) of surveyed preschools reported that participating in DPP encouraged their preschool to improve at least somewhat. Nearly one third of preschools reported that DPP encouraged them to improve the program “to a great extent.”



Qualistar<sup>1</sup> rated 21% of DPP classrooms as 4-Star classrooms, which is the highest rating possible. 75% of all DPP classrooms earned either a 3- or 4-Star Rating and 85% of DPP students are enrolled in 3- and 4-Star quality programs.

“Our providers are doing great work that proves the Denver Preschool Program is a quality program,” Piper added. “But DPP doesn’t just help those in the program- it truly offers a citywide benefit. These improvement grants not only help DPP providers, but they create a climate of quality among all DPP preschools.”

DPP’s preschool tuition credits are available to all Denver kids in the first year before entering kindergarten, regardless of their family’s income level. The evaluation found nearly one third of all DPP families would not be sending their children to preschool at all if it were not for the tuition credits. Also, nearly 90% of parents reported DPP helped their children maintain continuous enrollment in preschool which is vital to academic success.

Augenblick, Palaich and Associates (APA), a Denver-based policy-consulting firm, and Clayton Early Learning Institute conducted the 2010 evaluation. These firms gathered information from focus groups, parent and provider surveys, in-person and telephone interviews with parents and providers, and analysis of assessments and DPP data. The evaluation team analyzed 163 completed surveys from a sample of parents and 50 completed surveys from a sample of DPS, community-based, and home-based preschools.

The attached fact sheet lays out the highlights of the 2010 Evaluation.

The full reports are available upon request.

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***About Denver Preschool Program -- The Denver Preschool Program is the result of a ballot initiative approved by Denver residents in November 2006. The initiative recognizes the importance of quality early childhood educational opportunities for all City and County of Denver children by setting aside one-twelfth of one percent of sales tax revenues for improvement grants for preschool providers and tuition credits that families may use at the preschool of their choice. It is open and voluntary for all Denver children in the last year of preschool before kindergarten and includes all licensed preschool providers who agree to participate in its quality improvement system. For additional information on the program or to learn how to get involved, visit [www.dpp.org](http://www.dpp.org).***

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<sup>1</sup> Qualistar rates early childhood programs in Colorado based on the learning environment witnessed in a visit, family participation in questionnaires about with the program, level of professional development and work experience, adult to child ratios and accreditation by a nationally recognized early childhood organization.