Snapshot 2011-2012

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The division's mission:

- Provide educators with the tools and support to create high quality early childhood programs to maximize children's development and learning in all domains.

The Preschool Programs

35 Fully Funded Districts (31 Former Abbotts and Little Egg Harbor, Fairfield, Woodbine and Red Bank)

- 44,000 3- and 4-year olds

110 Partially Funded Districts

- 8,000 4-year-olds (and some 3s)

The preschool program in 2001-2002

- Enrollment— 19,000 out of estimated 50,000 (38%)
- Few certified teachers (43%), not necessarily early childhood certified
- Piecemeal curricula
- Substandard facilities
- Fiscal challenges
- Low classroom quality (3.86 out of 7 on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised)

Key components put in place

- Certified teacher and assistant for each class of 15 children;
- Developmentally appropriate, comprehensive curriculum;
- District/provider collaboration (district/provider contracts): 60% in community provider settings; 40% in district buildings
- Full-day (6 hour educational day), 180-day program;
- Coaches for in class follow up;
- Support for home languages of English language learners;
- Support for preschool children with potential difficulties
- Supports for families
- Fiscal monitoring and supports
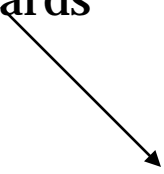
Key Initiatives/Documents

- Preschool Teaching & Learning Standards

- Preschool Program Guidelines and Code

- Use of evidence-based curricula/assessment

- Professional development to equip key district staff with tools and information

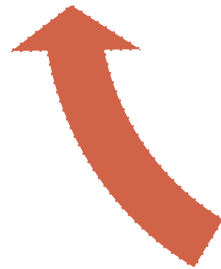# Continuous Improvement Cycle Tracks and Supports Implementation

Program standards

Measure & Assess Implementation

Analyze & Plan

Implement Change/PD

Evaluation at four levels drives PD/focus

Child

- Screening, Ongoing performance assessment

Classroom

- Structured Classroom Observation Instruments, curriculum-based fidelity instruments

District

- Program-wide self assessment

State

- Watch data, external child and classroom evaluations, collect and analyze district-reported info

A Look Inside Our High Quality Classrooms

Space & Furnishings designed for access

Personal Care Routines to support independence and learning

Interactions that extend *Language & Reasoning*

Ample time with developmentally appropriate materials, interactions and *activities that support math, language, science, and other domains*

Warm, responsive *interactions* that enhance social skills

Program structure/schedules that maximize learning and minimize transitions

Opportunities for *family involvement*

How We Measure Up

How quality was measured

To track quality, universities conduct evaluations on a random sample of the 3,000 classrooms in the program. This year William Paterson University will evaluate 300 classrooms with:

- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (Harms et al.)
- Preschool Classroom Mathematics Inventory (Frede et al)
- Supports for Early Literacy Assessment (Smith)

The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised Results

1= Inadequate
3= Minimal
5= Good
7= Excellent

5.0 associated with learning benefits

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised

SUBSCALE	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2011
space & furn.	3.76	4.00	4.57	4.72	4.90	5.03	5.03	5.16
personal care	3.69	4.20	4.47	4.16	4.30	4.29	4.34	4.49
language	4.27	4.57	4.97	5.03	5.08	5.46	5.56	5.84
activities	3.37	3.64	4.12	4.34	4.62	4.85	4.86	5.00
interactions	4.92	5.44	5.98	5.93	6.16	6.44	6.33	5.98
program structure	4.04	4.67	4.91	5.02	5.41	5.41	5.45	5.41
parents & staff	4.37	4.63	5.17	5.19	5.38	5.59	5.77	5.75
ECERS Overall	3.96	4.31	4.77	4.81	5.03	5.20	5.23	5.30

MATH PRACTICES

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Materials, activities and interactions for :

- counting, comparing, estimating, and recognizing number symbols

- measuring and comparing amount: volume, weight, length, height, distance, and area

- classifying and seriating

- geometry and spatial positions/relations

- one-to-one correspondence

- writing numbers for a purpose

- using mathematical terminology and reflection on mathematical problems

The Preschool Classroom Mathematics Inventory

1 = low quality
2 = poor quality
3 = fair quality
4 = good quality
5 = ideal quality

2003 STATEWIDE AVERAGE SCORE: 1.19
2011 STATEWIDE AVERAGE SCORE: 2.97

Literacy Practices

The Supports for Early Literacy Assessment

- Use print in the environment for a purpose.
- Create inviting places to look at a wide variety of books.
- Include a variety of literacy items, including writing and literacy props each center or area.
- Encourage and extend oral language.
- Use language and organize activities that introduces new words, concepts and linguistic structures.
- Share books to build language, knowledge, and a love of book reading.
- Call attention to the functions and features of print.
- Draw children's attention to the sounds they hear in words.
- Involve parents in supporting children's literacy development.

The Supports for Early Literacy Assessment

1 = low quality
2 = poor quality
3 = fair quality
4 = good quality
5 = ideal quality

2003 STATEWIDE AVERAGE SCORE: 2.82
2011 STATEWIDE AVERAGE SCORE: 4.09

Impact on children

Regression Discontinuity Design

- Comparisons were made between children who did and did not attend using the cut-off date for enrollment

Longitudinal Design

- In 2005 followed samples of children that attended the preschool program to those who did not (754 preschool participants, 284 who did not attend), through 2nd grade
- Second cohort in 2008
- Using NJ Smart to retrospectively look at 3rd grade test scores and 5th grade performance on battery of measures

Child measures

- Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, 3rd Edition (conceptual knowledge, receptive vocabulary)

- Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement, 3rd Edition (Applied Problems, Calculation, Math Fluency)

- Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement, 3rd Edition (Letter-Word Identification, Word Attack, Sound Awareness, Reading Fluency, Passage Comprehension)

The results

- Achievement gap cut in half for preschool attendees with two years of preschool having twice the effect of one
- Effects sustained through 2nd grade
- Differences between attendees and non attendees still significant at end of 2nd grade (some catch up)
- Grade repetition at grade 2:   10% (no preschool) 7.5% (1 yr) 5% (2 yrs)
- Fifth grade sneak peek

Next steps for evaluation

- Conduct evaluations on classrooms every other year
- Considering adding the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), Pianta et al. to zero in on differentiation
- Complete longitudinal study (5th graders and NJ Smart info)
- Helps school districts fine tune the use of assessment to inform instruction with a focus on literacy
- Piloting a Kindergarten Entry Assessment

Kindergarten

- Leadership track for P-3 administrators with focus on preschool and kindergarten

- Kindergarten seminar/kindergarten guidelines

- Designing targeted support and implementing in Camden, Paterson and Trenton in priority schools

Why kindergarten guidelines?

Initial impetus was a study of kindergarten practices in 12% (135 of 1087) of the kindergarten classrooms in the former Abbott districts conducted by William Paterson University

Kindergarten Guidelines

- Final version available at www.state.nj.us/education/ece/guide/Kindergarten Guidelines.pdf

- Rollout includes:
  - Early childhood contact meetings
  - Leader meetings
  - County superintendents
  - Guidance to districts about working with the guidelines
  - Modules for implementation
  - Use in Priority and Focus Schools

What we see a lot of

What we hope to see more of