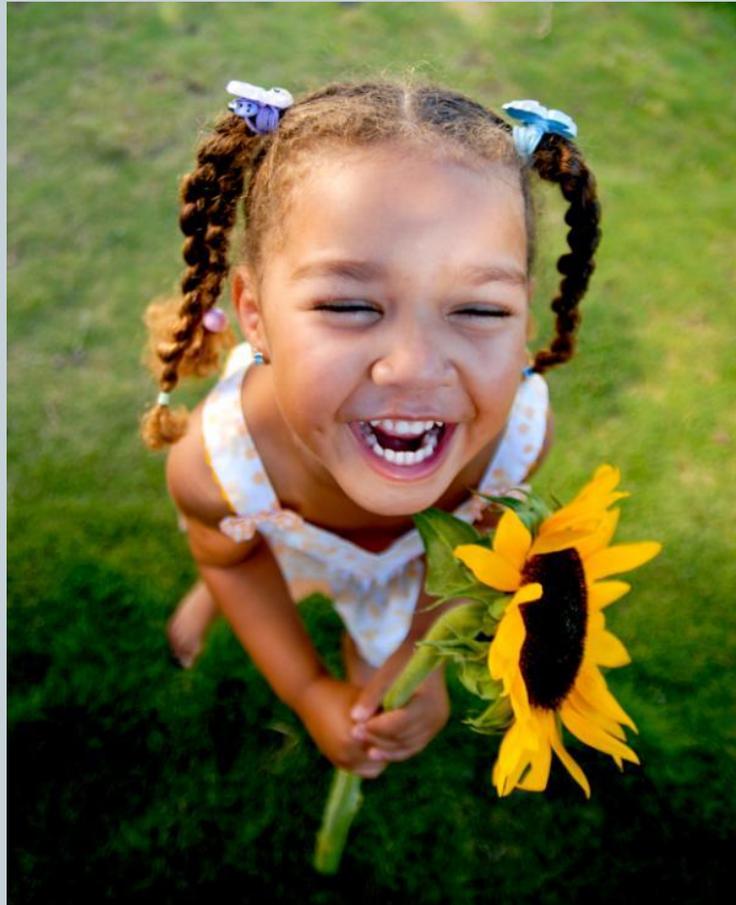


High Quality Preschool and its Impact

**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**



Ellen Wolock, Ed.D.
Director

Today's Presentation

2

- The context of the high quality preschool program
- What our division does
- What quality looks like
- How we improved the preschool program
- The impact of the program

The context for high quality: snapshot of NJ's preschools 2015-16



35 Fully Funded Districts (31 “former” Abbotts and Little Egg Harbor, Fairfield, Woodbine and Red Bank, 7 charter schools in the former Abbotts and in Red Bank)

- 45,875 3- and 4-year olds

112 Partially Funded Districts (including 17 districts participating in the Federal Preschool Expansion Grant)

- 95 school districts serve 8,127 4-year-olds (and some 3s)
- 17 school districts will serve 2,300 4-year-olds as part of the Federal Preschool Expansion Grant (at the end of the grant)

2015-16 Funding



- Total budget for the former Abbotts and 4 additional school districts (expanders) is \$611 million
- Total budget for the partially funded school districts “former Early Childhood Program Aid” and “Early Launch to Learning Initiative” school districts is \$44.5 million
- Budget for the Preschool Expansion Grant is \$17.5 million/year
- Funding is based on enrollment projections
- Base per pupils amounts for former Abbotts and expanders:
 - **\$12,788 (District)**
 - **\$7,943 (Head Start)**
 - **\$14,375 (Provider)**

Division composition



- 10 early childhood program specialists

Each program specialist has an area of specialization related to early childhood education, e.g., early literacy, assessment, math, science, dual language learners, provides training for key district staff, and is responsible for certain school districts and counties

- 1 Head Start collaboration director
- 1 Director of the Preschool Expansion Grant
- 1 Manager
- 1 Executive Director of the NJCYC
- 2 support staff
- 1 Division Director

What the districts can do with this \$ is spelled out clearly in our:



- **Preschool Program Guidelines and Code**
- **Budget Guidance**

Each year districts submit a plan that includes:

- Outreach/Program Delivery
- Administrative Oversight
- Master Teacher/Coaching
- Intervention & Support Services (Special Education, Inclusion, Preschool Intervention & Referral Teams)
- Health & Nutrition
- Family & Community Involvement
- Curriculum & Assessment
- Professional Development
- Supporting English Language Learners
- Transition
- Program Evaluation

In addition to reviewing and approving program plans and budgets, the division staff:



- Create program and learning standards and guidance based on current research on early childhood education
- Develop modules and other materials designed to facilitate the implementation
- Provide regional and on-site support to the key staff who turnkey the information
 - **EC Supervisors**
 - **Coaches**
 - **Preschool Intervention and Referral Teams**
 - **Social Services/Health Personnel**
- Track and adjust implementation using a continuous evaluation and improvement cycle

What is high quality?

The preschool program in 2001-2002

9

- Few teachers with early childhood training/certification
- Piecemeal curricula
- Substandard facilities
- Low classroom quality (3.86 out of 7 on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised)

A book area from a preschool classroom in 2002



The preschool program in 2015-16

11

- 100% certified teachers
- Use of comprehensive curricula
- Facilities designed specifically for preschoolers
- High quality (5.43 out of 7 on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised)

A book area from the current program

12



11/12/2015

Five essential ingredients led to a high quality preschool program for NJ

13



Ingredient 1: Used a program structure that increased the likelihood of success

14

- Qualified staff- Preschool certified teacher and an assistant for each class
- Small class size- 15 children max
- District/provider consistency- district/provider contracts with same regulations
- Intensive- Full-day (6 hour educational day), 180-day program

Ingredient 2: We paid attention to the particularized needs of the children

15

- Dual language programs for English learners, or at a minimum support for home language
- Inclusion of children with disabilities (62% of children with IEPs)
- Training and staffing to help preschool children with potential challenging behavior and potential learning difficulties (Preschool Intervention and Referral Teams)
- Multiple ways for families to be involved

Ingredient 3: Used comprehensive, evidence-based curricula and assessment

16

- Used developmentally appropriate, comprehensive curricula—High Scope, Creative Curriculum or Tools of the Mind
- Used performance based assessment—Child Observation Record, GOLD or Work Sampling System to collect information about children’s progress and inform instruction
- Districts were advised to implement with fidelity and avoid quick fixes and Band-Aids
- Implementing all components of a curriculum took time

Ingredient 4: Used professional development wisely

17

- Provided professional development to principals and directors of preschool programs
- Prepared teacher aides
- Provided embedded support of curriculum and assessment PD through coaches
- Conducted regular classroom walkthroughs
- We only used PD providers that were experts

Ingredient 5: Committed to the continuous evaluation and improvement cycle

18

Used preschool evaluation tools to drive improvement

Child: Screening, Ongoing performance assessment

Classroom: Structured classroom observation instruments, curriculum fidelity instruments, regular walkthroughs

Site: Grow NJ Kids (Safe, Healthy Learning Environments, Curriculum and Learning Environment, Family and Community Engagement, Workforce/Professional Development, Administration and Management)

District: Self Assessment and Validation System (SAVS) to check to see if each ingredient is in place- aggregated the numbers to refocus professional development

State : Watched data, conducted external child and classroom evaluations, collected and analyzed district-reported info

Chose classroom quality evaluation tools carefully

19

1. Started with the basics (e.g. Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised)
2. Next tackled the fidelity instrument for the comprehensive curriculum (e.g. High Scope's Preschool Quality Assessment or Creative Curriculum's Fidelity Checklist)
3. For classrooms that are in the "good" range or better, used instruments that zero in on a specific areas like teacher-child interaction, literacy, supports for English Learners, and inclusion of children with disabilities (e.g. Classroom Assessment Scoring System, Supports for Early Literacy Assessment, Inclusive Classroom Profile)

The progression of our quality



The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) Results (National Institute of Early Education Research)

1= Inadequate

3= Minimal

5= Good

7= Excellent

5.0 associated with learning benefits

300 observations across all of the school districts

Progression of quality using the ECERS-R

SUBSCALE	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2011	2013	2014	2015
space & furn.	3.76	4.00	4.57	4.72	4.90	5.03	5.03	5.16	5.05	5.17	5.22
personal care	3.69	4.20	4.47	4.16	4.30	4.29	4.34	4.49	4.63	4.12	4.40
language	4.27	4.57	4.97	5.03	5.08	5.46	5.56	5.84	4.74	4.90	5.14
activities	3.37	3.64	4.12	4.34	4.62	4.85	4.86	5.00	5.10	5.01	5.14
interactions	4.92	5.44	5.98	5.93	6.16	6.44	6.33	5.98	6.17	6.22	6.33
program structure	4.04	4.67	4.91	5.02	5.41	5.41	5.45	5.41	5.92	6.04	6.09
parents & staff	4.37	4.63	5.17	5.19	5.38	5.59	5.77	5.75	5.95	5.88	6.32
ECERS-R Overall	3.96	4.31	4.77	4.81	5.03	5.20	5.23	5.30	5.31	5.22	5.43

With all the ingredients combined you should see...

22



Warm and responsive teachers that enhance children's social skills, including children with disabilities



Classroom centers designed for preschoolers that promote each learning domain



Teachers scaffolding learning; introducing children to new concepts and vocabulary throughout the day

25

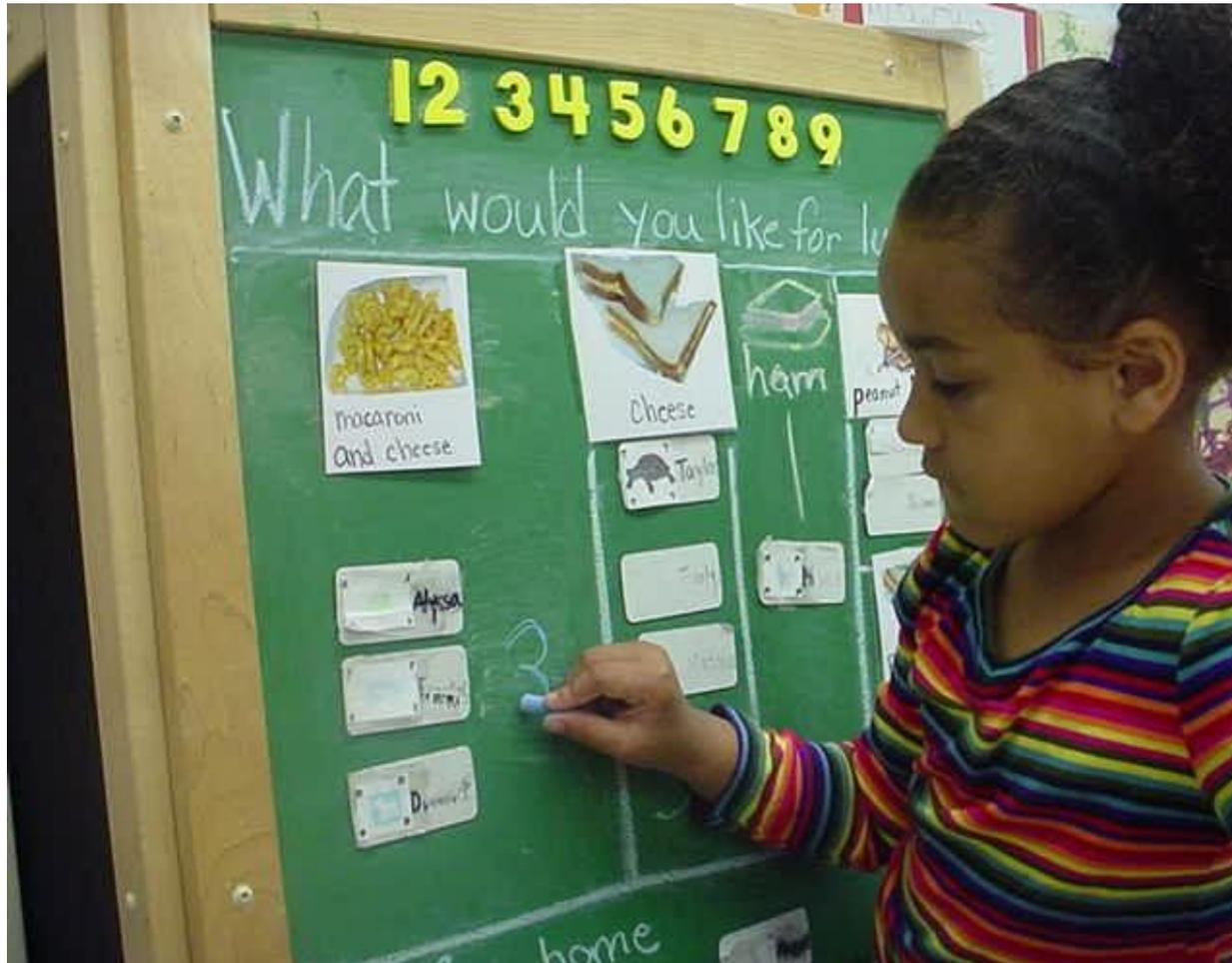


Supports for Home Languages

26



Classroom routines that promote emerging skills



Children developing independence and self regulation



Organized activities to promote listening and speaking skills



Children problem solving and experimenting with mathematical concepts



Classroom schedules that maximize learning and minimize transitions

31

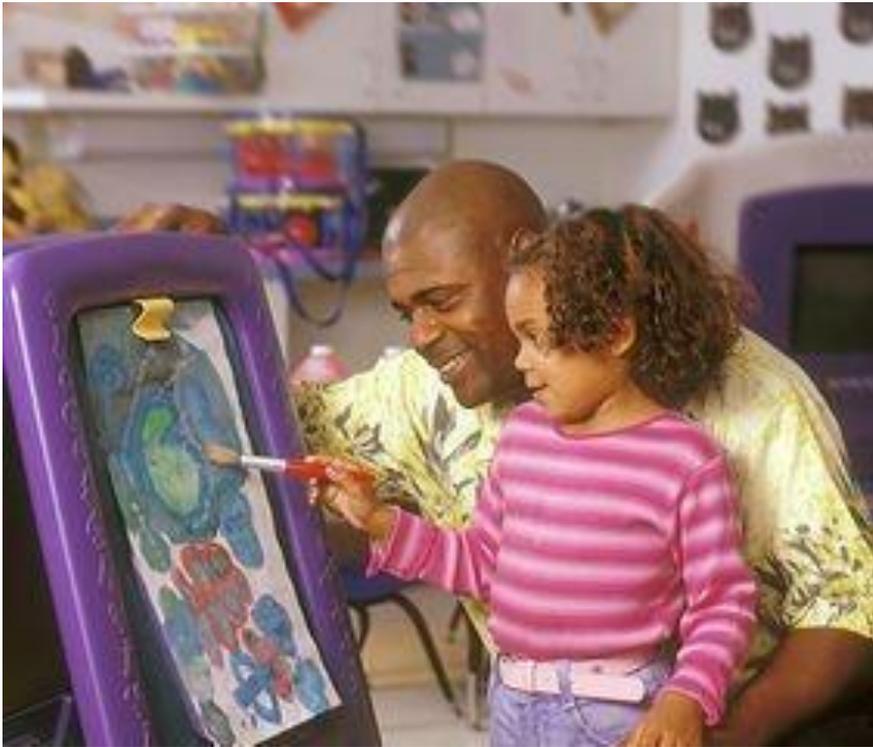


Children's writing

32



Involved Families



Impact on children



Tracking preschool participants*



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)
- Retrospectively looked at state test scores using NJ SMART and 5th grade performance on battery of measures

*Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study: Fifth Grade Follow Up
National Institute of Early Education Research, March 2013

The benefits for NJ's children



- At kindergarten entry most of the achievement gap was closed for preschool attendees with two years of preschool having twice the effect of one
- Differences between attendees and non attendees were maintained through 5th grade*
- Children who attended preschool were 3/4 year ahead of children who did not attend in 5th grade
- Reduction in grade retention and special education placement rates

*Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study: Fifth Grade Follow Up
National Institute of Early Education Research, March 2013

Where you'll find the 5 ingredients

37

NJ Preschool Teaching & Learning Standards

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/ece/guide/standards.pdf>

NJ Preschool Program Guidelines

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/ece/guide/impguidelines.pdf>

Grow NJ Kids

<http://www.nj.gov/humanservices/dfd/programs/child/grow/>

New Jersey Administrative Code: Elements of High Quality Preschool Programs

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/title6a/chap13a.pdf>

Self Assessment and Validation System

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/ece/savs/>