Georgia’s Pre-K to Third Grade Analysis

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Commissioner

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
www.decal.ga.gov
Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL)

- Created in 2004
- Aligned key early education programs and initiatives

Administers:
- Georgia’s Pre-K Program
- Child Care Licensing
- Child Care Subsidy (CAPS)
- Quality Rated
- Head Start State Collaboration Office
- Federal Nutrition Programs
- Other Early Learning Initiatives
Georgia’s Pre-K Program

- Established in 1992
- Funded by the Georgia Lottery for Education
- Available in every Georgia county
- Serves approximately 60% of four year olds
- Successful public-private partnership
Issue: School Readiness

Achievement gap can be detected as early as 18 months.

Research continues to demonstrate the impact of high quality preschool, especially for children from lower socio-economic backgrounds and children with diverse needs.

Georgia’s Pre-K Program consistently offers a high quality experience that increases children’s school readiness.
GA·AWARDS Analysis Study Description

Analysis compared Georgia Milestones 3rd grade end of grade (EOGs) for a group of children who attended Georgia’s Pre-K to a group of children who did not attend Georgia’s Pre-K.

Study utilized GA·AWARDS data set.

Research focused on full population of children who attended Georgia’s Pre-K and subsample of children who receive free or reduced lunch.

Research identified priority of Alliance of Education Agency Heads.
Methods

Started with 136,310 children with 3rd grade Georgia Milestones EOG assessments score in 2015-2016

Matched children on:
- kindergarten school
- free/reduced lunch
- home language (English or not)
- identified disability in kindergarten
- gender
- race
- Hispanic origin
- age in years in 3rd grade

Final Sizes: 46,262 for both samples
Children who attended Georgia’s Pre-K perform better on Georgia Milestones EOG Assessments in 3rd grade than those who did not attend.
Put Another Way...

For 3rd graders who had attended Georgia’s Pre-K Program, the odds of being Proficient or Distinguished were:

- 10% higher in English Language Arts (ELA)
- 18% higher in Math
- 9% higher in Science
- 12% higher in Social Studies
Overall Findings

- Small but meaningful differences in Georgia Milestone EOGs test scores for children who had attended Georgia’s Pre-K.
  - Test is four years after participating in Georgia’s Pre-K.
  - Pre-K is a broad “intervention,” and Georgia Milestones EOGs are broad assessments.
- Pre-K most strongly related to 3rd grade test scores for vulnerable children.
  - Impact greater for children eligible for free/reduced lunch.
  - Impact greater for children with a home language other than English.
Policy Implications

- GAAWARDS analysis demonstrates the benefit of investments made in a longitudinal data system.
- Continue to support Georgia’s Pre-K Program as a key, impactful component of the state’s education pipeline.
- Increase early education access including, but not limited to, Georgia’s Pre-K Program.
  - Quality Rated child care programs
  - Early Head Start/Head Start
- Continue alignment with Kindergarten – Third Grade
Barriers for Rural Communities

- High Cost of Child Care
- Limited Access to Quality Child Care
  - Fewer child care programs
  - Transportation to and from care
- Workforce issues
  - Lack of qualified teachers
  - Compensation