

Nevada State Funded Pre-k Program
Closing the Achievement Gap and Building a Foundation for School Readiness and Success

Statement of Priorities: The Office of Early Learning and Development in the Nevada Department of Education (NDE), through the Nevada State Funded Pre-k Program builds a foundation for school readiness and success in K-12 and beyond by closing the achievement gap. High quality early childhood programs such as the Nevada State Funded Pre-k Program directly increases high school completion and success in school and later in life.

Key Facts:

- The Nevada State Funded Pre-k Program first received funding in 2001 to improve school readiness by providing high-quality early education that supports parent involvement.
- The program first served 694 students, and today serves 1,393 children.
- 70 percent of the achievement gap is created before the beginning of second grade and most likely between birth and kindergarten.
- Research on early childhood education has clearly shown that participation in high quality preschool education programs has positive short-term effects on cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. In fact, several analyses calculated that preschool education programs produce a gain of one-half (0.50) standard deviation on cognitive development, which is the equivalent of a move from the 30th to the 50th percentile on achievement tests.
- The outcomes found in national longitudinal evaluations of preschool programs suggest that the positive long-term effects are primarily because preschool children had different experiences in elementary school due to the cognitive gains achieved in preschool.
- The Nevada State Funded Pre-k Program has over 12 years of longitudinal data demonstrating:
 - 1) Significant learning gains achieved in preschool;
 - 2) Gains maintained throughout elementary years;
 - 3) Reduction and/or elimination of the achievement gap; and
 - 4) Increased number of students proficiency in math and reading.
- The program serves 1,393 children within 10 school districts and 1 community-based program throughout the state (34 sites) and serving approximately 1.7 percent of our current preschool population.
- According to the 2012-13 Evaluation Report, the Nevada State Funded Pre-k Program included 44% of children identified as English as a second language learners, but maintained a waiting list of over 1,200 children.
- The Nevada State Funded Pre-k Program was cited by education researchers for high standards, well-educated teachers, and meeting seven out of ten national benchmarks of quality. Despite this, the state gets very low marks for accessibility to high quality preschool.
- The Early Childhood Advisory Council works in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services to oversee early childhood education and care including incorporation of data into the P-12 data system.

Effectiveness of the Program:

The Nevada State Funded Pre-k Program continues to be successful as determined by the external evaluator contracted to measure impacts of the state’s investment in preschool. Students who participated in the program out-perform other students:

Group	Percent Proficient	Percent Proficient
All Students	READING	MATH
Cohort 6 ECE	58.2%	71.2%
Non-ECE	54.4%	67.7%

FY2012-13 Evaluation Report

Performance of Cohort 6 Pre-k and Non-Pre-k Groups on Nevada CRT, Grade 3

Group	Average Score BEFORE Pre-k	Average Score AFTER Pre-k	Average Score in Grade 3
All Students			
PPVT-Receptive Vocabulary	87.07	96.67	98.76
EOWPVT- Expressive Vocab	82.07	95.07	97.48
Students who could take assessments upon enrollment.			
PPVT-Receptive Vocabulary	89.84	99.34	100.07
EOWPVT- Expressive Vocab	85.15	98.18	99.18
Students who could NOT take assessments at enrollment due to lack of English skills			
PPVT-Receptive Vocabulary	69.18	79.42	90.3
EOWPVT- Expressive Vocab	62.18	75	85.87

FY2012-13 Evaluation Report

Closing the Achievement Gap: Receptive and Expressive Vocabulary Gains of Cohort 6 in Pre-k and Grade 3 by English Skills

Developmental Progress of Children:

The Nevada State Funded Pre-k Program had short and long term effects on the developmental progress of children. Children enrolled made large cognitive gains in preschool and were clearly better prepared to enter kindergarten academically than if they had not participated in the pre-k program. This is an important achievement for the largely at-risk student population served in the program because it closed some of the gap in school readiness with average students and avoided some early obstacles that most at-risk student populations face, thus providing them a better chance at early school success. It is especially important for the large number of English language learners in the program who, in fact, may have even benefited the most academically from the program. These developmental gains during early learning help ease their transition into school, preparing them for future success.

After preschool, students appear, at the very least, to have maintained the significant learning gains they achieved in preschool through elementary school, consistent with the national research results on long-term cognitive effects. The results suggest that participation in the State Funded Pre-k Program may decrease the need for extra services in elementary school, such as participation in English as a Second Language services and/or special education services.

Parent Involvement:

The parents of the children who participated in the pre-k program became more involved in the education of their children, including spending more quality time with them, especially in terms of reading with their children. As research has demonstrated, increased parent involvement leads to increased student achievement due, in part, to the value of education that parents convey to their children by their own actions.

After preschool, the parents of the children continued to be very involved in their children’s learning. In fact, the parents of the children are at least as involved, if not more involved, in their children’s learning as their schoolmates’ parents.

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