

High-Quality Prekindergarten

What is it, and how can it be achieved?

Early Childhood Fellows Program Tuesday | Sept. 13, 2022

## What is a state-funded prekindergarten program?



- Serves children of preschool age, usually 3- and/or 4-year-olds.
- Controlled and directed by the state.
- Typically funded by the state but can be funded by cities and school districts.
- Distinct from but may be coordinated and integrated with state child care subsidy system.
- Most designed to provide grants to community-based organizations and/or instead of, school districts.
- Varies from state to state:
  - Universally available or focused on specific populations (e.g., children from low-income backgrounds).
  - Early learning standards and guidelines for choosing curricula.

## Common Prekindergarten Myths



It's just babysitting.

Effects are overstated.

It doesn't work.

Benefits fade quickly.

## Speakers





Anna Shapiro, Ph.D.

Research Scientist University of Virginia



**Albert Wat** 

Senior Policy Director Alliance for Early Success

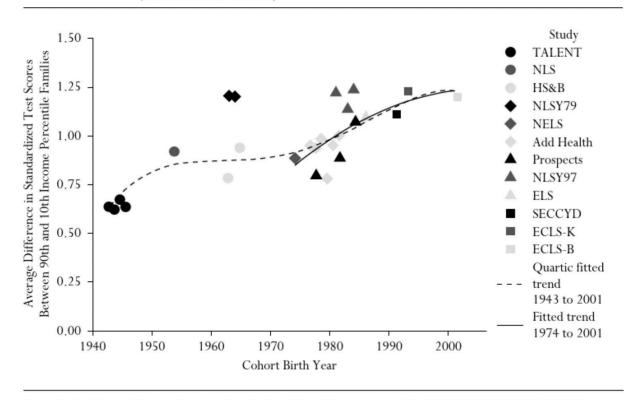
# Public Pre-K: What the Evidence Says

Dr. Anna Shapiro

University of Virginia

# Achievement gaps between the **highest** and **lowest** income children have increased over time.

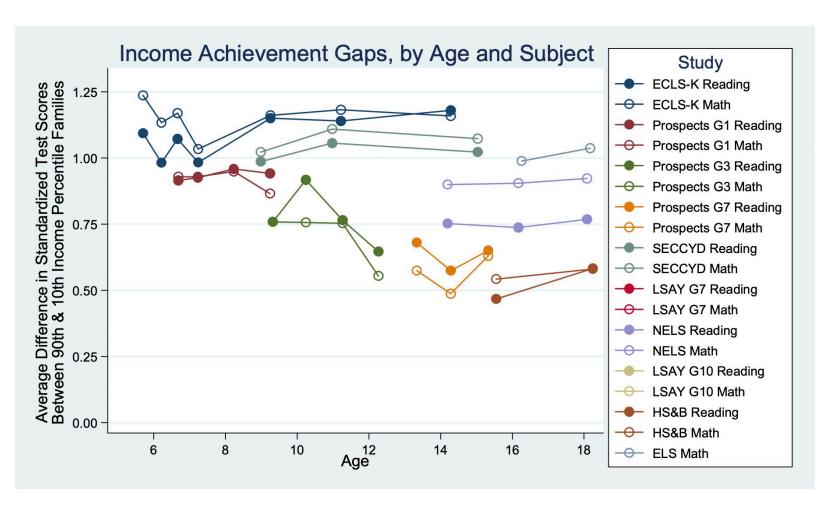
FIGURE 5.1 Trend in 90/10 Income Achievement Gap in Reading, by Birth Cohort (1943 to 2001 Cohorts)



Source: Authors' compilation based on data from Project Talent (Flanagan et al. n.d.); NLS, HS&B, NELS, ELS, ECLS-K, ECLS-B (U.S. Department of Education, Center for Education Statistics 1999, 2000, 2001, 2004, 2009, 2010); Prospects (U.S. Department of Education 1995); NLSY79, NLSY97 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 1980, 1999); SECCYD (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development 2010); and Add Health (Harris 2009, reading only).

Note: See note 4 and online appendix for further details.

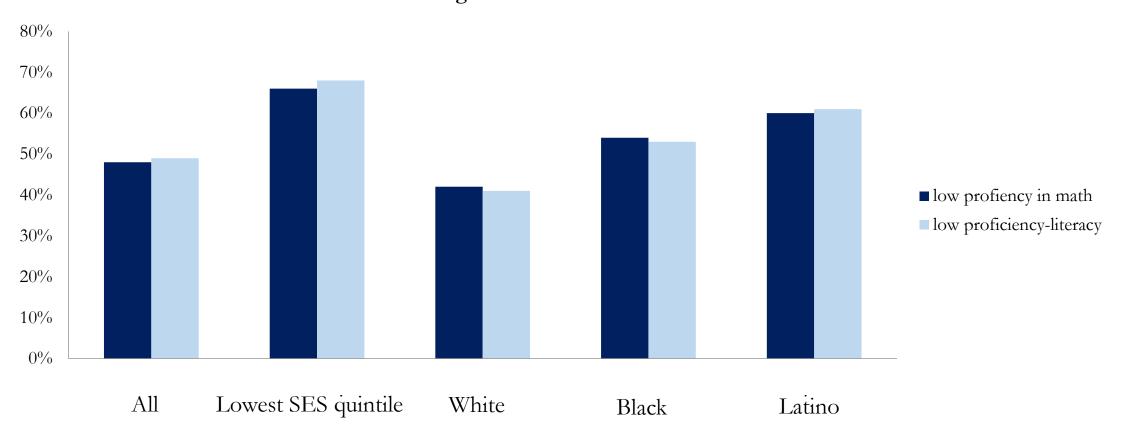
# Most of the gaps measured across primary schooling are present at school-entry.



7

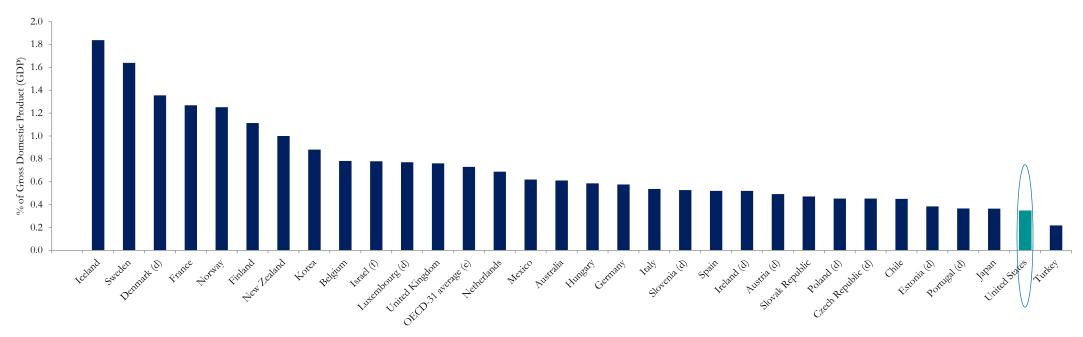
# Too many children in the United States are not entering school ready to learn.

Percentage of students with low proficiency in math and literacy, 2010 ECLS-K kindergarten cohort



# U.S. lags nearly all nations with advanced economies in spending on early childhood care and education.

Public spending on early childhood care and education as a % of GDP, 2013 and latest available

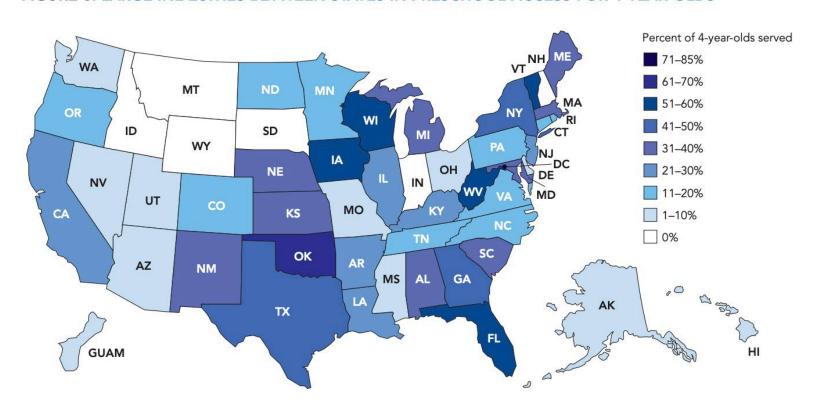


Source: OECD Social Expenditure Database (3.1A)

Note: Total expenditures include child care and pre-primary education expenditures

# Access to publicly funded pre-K varies considerably across the states.

### FIGURE 8: LARGE INEQUITIES BETWEEN STATES IN PRESCHOOL ACCESS FOR 4-YEAR-OLDS

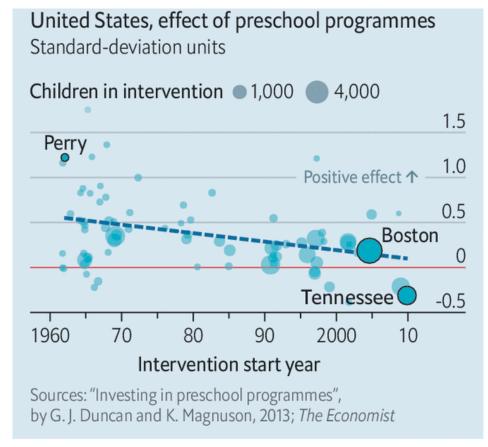


## Pre-K Evidence

Decades of evidence shows preschool better prepares children for kindergarten and effects can last into adulthood (Phillips et al., 2017; Yoshikawa et al., 2013)

Experimental evidence from modern day public pre-K programs on test score impacts is more mixed

- Bigger and more complex systems
- More kids are going to alternate pre-K programs in the comparison group



The Economist

# Test score effects fade, but pre-K has long-term benefits.

Recent results from studies of Boston's PK program (Gray-Lobe, Pathak & Walters, 2021) and Georgia's public PK program (Berne, 2022) add to this evidence base

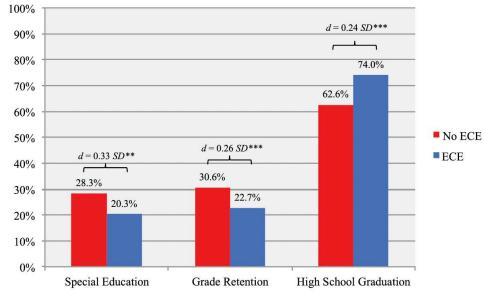


FIGURE 1. Average rates of special education placement, grade retention, and high school graduation for early childhood education participants versus nonparticipants

Effect sizes (*d*) represent results from all available observations (n = 75). Percentage point data represent results from a subset of observations (n = 62) with available data.

<sup>\*\*</sup>p < .01. \*\*\*p < .001.

# Making the most of public pre-K investments

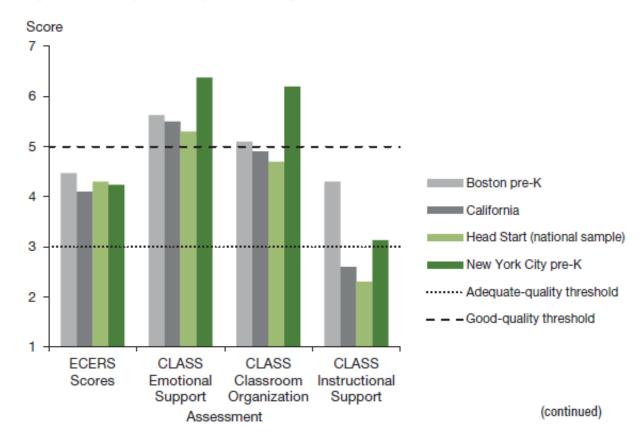
## Quality matters, but varies a lot across public pre-K programs.

Public pre-K programs are in good shape in terms of class size, teacher-child ratios, basic safety, and emotional climate

Instructional quality is barely adequate in most large-scale systems

Evidence- and play-based curriculum with a specified scope and sequence and regular coaching can be powerful levers for improving quality in large-scale programs, yet they are not used in most of today's programs (Weiland & Yoshikawa, 2021)

Figure 1. Cross-System Comparisons Using ECERS and CLASS Scores



# Mixed delivery systems are the most common, but ensuring quality across settings is crucial.

Benefits	Challenges
Gives flexibility to families	Unequal compensation across sectors
Supports existing ECE programs in communities	Quality may vary in systematic ways
	Transition to kindergarten

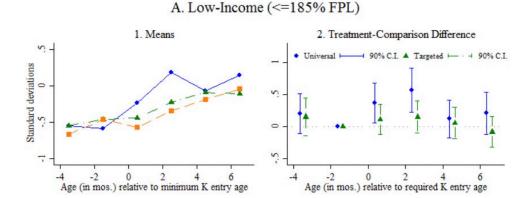
**Source**: Early Learning Network

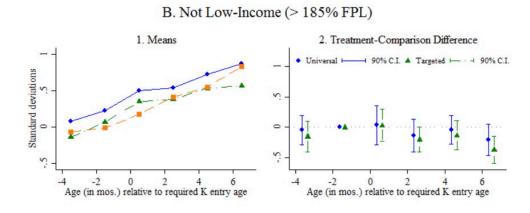
## Universal programs are more effective.

Recent study (Cascio, 2019) found that universal programs (i.e., programs open to all families) have larger impacts than do income-targeted programs

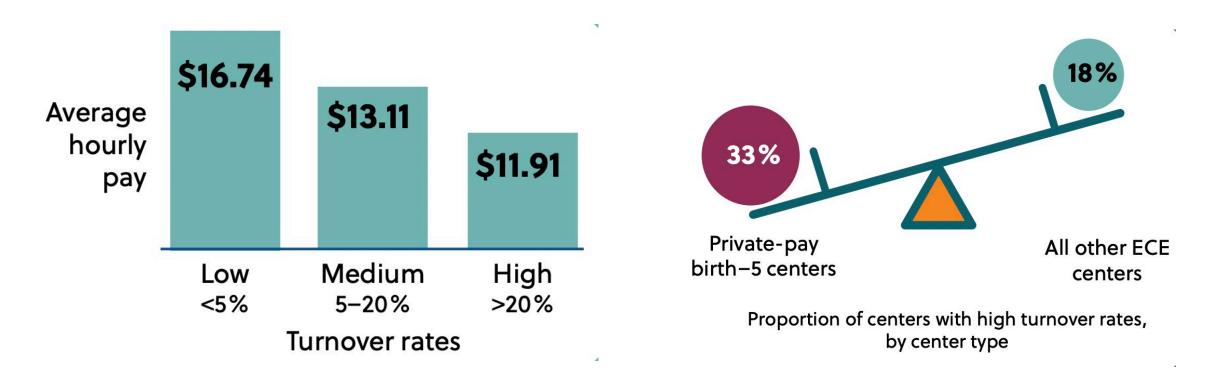
Importantly, the benefits of universal programs are particularly large for children from low-income families

Figure 5. Pre-K Eligibility and Test Scores by Age, State Program Type, and Poverty Status





# Supporting the ECE workforce is vital.



**Source**: Institute for Education Sciences, *Staff turnover in the early childhood workforce* 





BUILDING HIGH-QUALITY & EQUITABLE PRE-K SYSTEMS Lessons and Tools from the Partnership for Pre-K Improvement Project

NCSL Early Childhood Fellows – Sept. 13, 2022



# The Partnership for pre-K Improvement (PPI)

Develop and sustain high-quality, equitable pre-K programs that produce positive early learning opportunities for every child

- 5-year collaboration by pre-K systems, research organizations, and advocacy groups in OR, TN, and WA
- Convened by Cultivate Learning, Alliance for Early Success, and Start Early
- Generously supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates
   Foundation

# Partnership for Pre-K Improvement



## **Project Aims**

- Learn together with states about how to implement and improve equitable and high-quality systems
- Develop strong program, advocacy, and research partnerships to sustain improvements over time
- Create tools to support states in building and implementing high-quality, equitable pre-k systems



# Theory of Change





- Systems Context
- Infrastructure
- Program Practices
- Classroom Quality
- Child Outcomes

## Outcomes and Lessons from PPI



## **OREGON**

- New funding for early childhood education from Student Success Act (\$200 million annually for early education)
- Engaged stakeholders, including families and providers, to revise pre-K standards
- Supported TA providers and instructional leaders to implement quality standards at the local level
- Aligned quality standards, monitoring, and coaching activities across ECE programs and settings

## WASHINGTON

- Passage of Fair Start for Kids Act (access and quality for both pre-K and child care)
- Increased capacity for improving inclusive practices with children with special learning needs
- Invested in racial equity training (e.g., implicit bias) and strategies (e.g., engaging tribes on implementing early learning programs)

## TENNESSEE

- Sustained funding for VPK
- Articulated vision for VPK quality
- Implemented quality assurance policies (e.g., use of evidence-based curriculum, competitive grant application)
- Invested in first statewide quality data collection effort
- Explored collaboration between VPK and Head Start and alignment with K-3

## Outcomes and Lessons from PPI



- Importance of articulating a vision for pre-K quality and prioritize improvement strategy
- Invest in infrastructure for implementation and continuous, data-informed improvement
- Anticipate how work on pre-K will likely lead to work in child care, Head Start, and K-3; with schools, centers, and home-based providers
- The added value of state agencies partnering with researchers and advocates

## 1. Engage Stakeholders & **Build Partnerships**

- 2. Assess the **System**
- 3. Implement, Improve and Advocate

## **Navigating the PPI Toolkit**

### **Engage Stakeholders & Build Partnerships** Step 1





## Stakeholder Partnerships



1a. Stakeholder Partnership Brief 1b. Early Childhood System Map 1c. Stakeholder Partnership Action Planning and Tracking Tool



### **Building Program-Advocacy-**Research Partnerships

2. Building Program-Advocacy-Research Partnerships



## Advocacy-Agency Alignment

3. Assessing Advocacy-Agency Alignment in Advancing Early Learning Policy



## Stakeholder Engagement and Equity Commitments

4a. Considerations for Equity Commitments 4b. Team Planning template

4c. Sample Email template

4d. Sample Agenda template

4e. Example MOUs

between the Alliance for Early Success, Cultivate Learning and Start Early with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation This work is licensed under the

the Partnership for Pre-K Improvement, a collaboration

This work was created as part of

Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0

To view a copy of this license, mons.org/8censes/by-sa/4.0/ or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA

© 2021 University of Washington All rights reserved.

FOR PRE-K IMPROVEMENT

PARTNERSHIP

## **Assess the System**



Step 2

## The Implementation Development Map (IDM)

1a. Components of the IDM

1b. Equity Driven Quality Improvement 1c. Getting Ready to Score the IDM

1e. High-Quality Data Defintions 1f. Data Landscape Template

1g. Statewide Program Survey 1h IDM Resource List

### Assessing Agency Leadership and **Capacity for Early Learning**

### Tool(s)

2. Assess Agency Leadership and Capacity for Early Learning Framework and Assessment Tools



## **Early Learning System Considerations for Alignment**

3. Early Learning System Considerations for Alignment Tool

## Implement, Improve & Advocate



State Pre-K Political Considerations

## Tool(s)

1. State Pre-K Political Considerations



## Advancing High-Quality Policy

### Tool(s)

5a. Advancing High-Quality Policy: Policy Development Process Guide 5b. Policy-Practice Feedback Loop Protocol



### Estimating the Cost of Quality

### Tool(s)

9. Estimating the Cost of Quality: A Resource Guide



### Moving From IDM **Results to Action**

## Tool(s)

2. Moving From IDM Results to Action



### Training and Technical Assistance (TA)

## Tool(s)

6a. Re-envisioning Training and TA Priorities 6b. Training and TA Action Plan



## Systems Change

### Tool(s)

10. Frameworks Guiding Pre-K System Improvement Work



### **Equity Driven Action** Planning

## Tool(s)

3. Equity Driven Action Planning Template



## Promoting Job-Embedded Professional Learning (JEPL)

7a. Promoting JEPL Policy and Data Tools 7b. JEPL Policy and Data Tool Template



### Learning Agenda Tool(s)

4. Learning Agenda



## **Analyzing Data**

8a. Analyze Data: State-Level Data Use Tools for CQI 8b. Analyze Data: CQI Planner

### **PPI Advocacy Campaign Materials**

11a. Advocacy Messaging Overview

11b. Audio Files for 6s, 15s and 30s to use in Spotify, Pandora, Podcasts intros and outros and break spots

11c. Presentation/Infographic Templates for re-use and customization with how-to guide

11d. Social Media Graphics for re-use and customization, with how-to guide

11e. Video Files: 6s, 15s, 30s, and 60s videos that can be used on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and Linkedin



# Implementation Development Map (IDM)

IDM is a self-assessment tool designed to evaluate the quality, and equity of the pre-K system, across seven elements essential to high quality pre-K.

- Each element has between 7-12 indicators
- •Each indicator gives a progression of a pre-K policy or practice along **four developmental stages** that a state can select based on available data

0	0	0	0
Initial Stages	In Development	In Place	Well Established

<sup>•</sup>Infrastructure and implementation Indicators



## Investing in Infrastructure for Implementation: Going Beyond Policies and Standards

## Need to attend to capacity for implementation at local, regional, and state levels. For example...

## **Professional Development and Supports**

- Coaching system (training, staffing and support)
- Support for instructional leaders
- Data collection and analysis
- Cultural competence

## **Curriculum and Assessment**

- Training system (staffing, resources and materials)
- Data collection and analysis
- Culturally relevant and equitable tools

## **Data Infrastructure**

- Data system (children, programs, educators)
- Data tools (assessment, surveys)
- Data use and analysis capacity (staffing, expertise)



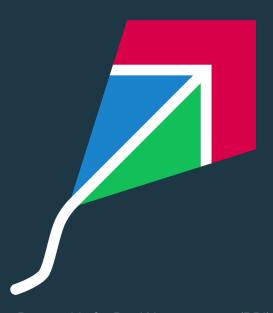
# For more on PPI...

## For more information:

PPI Toolkit: <a href="https://upk-improvement.org/">https://upk-improvement.org/</a>
Questions about the Toolkit? Contact: <a href="mailto:ppitoolkitinfo@uw.edu">ppitoolkitinfo@uw.edu</a>

For general inquiries:
Albert Wat, Senior Policy Director
Alliance for Early Success
<a href="mailto:awat@earlysuccess.org">awat@earlysuccess.org</a>

# Thank You



## PARTNERSHIP FOR PRE-K IMPROVEMENT

## Acknowledgement

This work was created as part of the Partnership for Pre-K Improvement (PPI), a collaboration between the Alliance for Early Success, Cultivate Learning, and Start Early with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/ or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

© 2021 University of Washington. All rights reserved.

## Learn More



SCHOOL of EDUCATION and HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

https://education.virginia.edu/anna-shapiro



https://earlysuccess.org/

