

**Evaluation of Child Outcomes in Nine Child-Parent Centers Report for 2016-17**  
**Chicago Pay for Success Year 3 Outcomes Report**  
**Addendum to the Independent Evaluation**  
**Produced by the City of Chicago & Chicago Public Schools**  
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As Chicago Public Schools (CPS) oversees the implementation of Child-Parent Centers (CPC) through this Pay for Success (PFS) initiative, the District is committed to focusing on quality instruction that has been proven to support long-term child outcomes. In addition to expanding access to the CPC program for thousands more children through this investment, the construct of the PFS model allows CPS to learn from executing the scaling of this proven model with new populations in real-time. One of the primary goals of the pre-kindergarten expansion is to ensure that more children across the city receive early instruction to begin their K-12 education on the right foot, and in order to achieve this goal, CPS educators are committed to ensuring both quality instruction for all participating students and families and a process of continuous quality improvement that will ensure that the promise early education is achieved. This PFS initiative uses outcome metrics data chosen from the District's readily available tools, which provide both insights and limitations for the system overall. The independent PFS evaluation from SRI details some of the specific constraints of the outcomes measurements, which provides valuable lessons for the broader system of early childhood programming in Chicago Public Schools and to inform quality improvement initiatives currently underway throughout the City.

Below are some highlighted areas that can help better understand the variation in kindergarten ***Evaluation of Child Outcomes in Nine Child-Parent Centers: Report for 2016-17***, prepared by SRI International.

**Kindergarten Readiness:**

Over the last three evaluations, there have been some trends that will help to inform the system-wide policies and metrics around kindergarten readiness. As SRI outlines in its report, there are significant limitations of the Teaching Strategies GOLD™ (TS GOLD) tool being used for this purpose based on the constructs of the assessments, and CPS generally utilizes outcomes from TS GOLD™ to help inform instruction. The fact that this tool is implemented city-wide allowed for efficient analysis for purposes of the PFS initiative, however the sensitivity of the tool to teachers' observation and discretion complicates the usage for outcome measurements.

**Comparing Cohorts:**

Given the relatively consistent kindergarten readiness rates from cohort 2 to cohort 3 overall, fluctuations in kindergarten readiness rates at the school or classroom level could be caused by many factors that are difficult to determine. The rapid expansion of the CPC program into new communities and enrollment of families in new demographics can help account for some drastic differences between cohort 1 and the following two cohorts, however the more consistent demographics across cohort 2 and 3 make it more challenging to compare at a granular level. Without identifying a metric for where a child started at the beginning of the

year, we cannot determine a growth metric of how much progress the cohort has made over the course of the year. For example, some children in a cohort may have started their preschool experience significantly behind their peers developmentally, so achieving kindergarten readiness (as defined by the PFS success metrics) is much more difficult by the end of the year. This, it is difficult to compare two different groups of children at a classrooms level based on only the end of year outcomes without more context.

### **Teacher Trends:**

Finding highly qualified preschool teachers who are fluent in multiple languages is a challenge across the country, including in the local Chicago context. While all teachers in CPS classrooms meet state licensing standards for teaching children with bilingual or English language learner needs, these requirements do not necessitate that teachers speak the home language of the child. This means that some teachers may not speak the child's home language. The impact of this can be that children are being supported with best practices in English as a second language development, but may not have home language support within the classroom, impacting the their language development accordingly.

This year, CPS saw far fewer teacher leaves or turn-over in the classroom, meaning most of the teachers leading classrooms at the 9 sites have experience with managing preschool classrooms and the assessment tools being implemented. This also could help account for the stability in kindergarten readiness scores across cohort 2 and 3.

### **Implications and Lessons:**

There are a few lessons on implementation of TS GOLD™ that are worthy of noting as CPS seeks lessons from this initiative. As CPS aims to provide developmentally appropriate, academically rigorous, and data-driven instruction across the District, there are a number of systems-level learnings from the PFS initiative that will assist:

- It is important to ensure that teachers have a level of competency in assessing children using TS GOLD™ demonstrating their reliability on the tool. Ensuring the teachers have completed interrater reliability modules
- Data from TS GOLD™ must be tracked beyond preschool and transfer with the child to kindergarten. Each year of the PFS evaluation, we identified a number of children who's TS GOLD™ data got accidentally archived or transferred incorrectly. More systemic tracking and transitioning of this data will help reduce the incidence of this City-wide.
- There is a need to identify a measurement of K readiness that can be utilized in the child's home language, as well. As noted in the report, TS GOLD™ instructs teachers to evaluate children in their home language (as possible) until they reach a level of proficiency in English. However, 76 of the 90 children with missing data are due to the fact that these children were assessed in Spanish where there are no scaled scores available. Choosing a metric for K readiness that allows for multilingual assessment is key for a District as diverse as Chicago.

### **Special Education Rates:**

In addition to the analysis that SRI presented in regards to Special Education outcomes, there are three notable factors that impact the comparison of rates of special education utilization between kindergarteners who had preschool and those with no known preschool. As policy and best practice dictate, Chicago's preschool programs are designed to seek out and identify

children in need of special education service, and these children were thus excluded from the PFS study's control group by virtue of having been enrolled in preschool. These contextual factors point to the limitations of using this comparison group to define a benchmark of Special Education utilization in comparison to those students involved in the CPC intervention:

- All children participating in Chicago's early childhood programs—regardless of funding stream—are screened and evaluated for developmental delays. While this is best practice for child development, this practice could be leading to a higher rate of children entering kindergarten with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) if they had participated in preschool in Chicago. These children would have been excluded from the comparison group.
- Children with IEP's are prioritized in preschool admissions across CPS, regardless of program model. Given the finite amount of preschool seats across the District, children with IEP's represent a larger percentage of the overall preschool population enrolled in Chicago than in other grades due to federal mandates that those children be prioritized for services. Given that children with IEP's are thus enrolled in preschool at higher rates, the comparison group of children used in this study would eliminate most if not all children who were identified as needing special education prior to kindergarten.
- A significant portion of Chicago's early childhood system beyond the CPC programming is funded through federal Head Start funding. This funding mandates that providers seek to identify and serve children at-risk of academic failure due to having a disability or delay. This also leads to a higher percentage of children with IEP's that are part of the early childhood system and consequently excluded from the comparison group.

### **Implementation Support for CPS in the 2017-18 School Year and Beyond:**

The intention of the Pay for Success project is to provide valuable, real time insights into implementation. When CPS began looking at the outcomes data with SRI, it offered an opportunity to make both immediate improvements to the system and plan for on-going changes necessary to support improved outcomes on an on-going basis. Below are some ways that the CPC PFS are influencing the CPS system:

- ***Immediate System Improvements:*** Systems of teacher instructional quality supports are put in place to best track and leverage the tools being implemented. TS GOLD reliability module completion are tracked and monitored, metrics of teaching practice (CLASS) is used to help target instructional improvement, and on-going reporting on family engagement and professional learning has been sustained and improved.
- ***Immediate Service Improvements:*** One key success of the PFS initiative is the additional family support resources that have been provided by Metropolitan Family Services. These have significantly enhanced the programming offered at the PFS sites, and for the 2017-18 school year, CPS was able to expand the services offered by MFS to include all CPC sites across the District. We are looking into sustaining and possibly further expanding the family engagement supports available to all schools moving forward, based on the experience of working with Metropolitan Family Services.
- ***Future System Improvements:*** The PFS initiative highlighted the need for:
  - o Improved system-wide accountability for completing the TS GOLD assessments accurately and on time.

- Identifying a cohesive definition of kindergarten readiness that is more inclusive of dual language learners and is more easily digestible for teachers in practice.
  - These outcomes, along with other local and national research, helped reinforce the strategic objective to offer more full-day preschool in CPS schools. As demonstrated through SRI's analysis, full-day preschool is more effective than half-day programs in preparing children for success in kindergarten and beyond.
- ***Sustaining the PFS Funded Classrooms:*** Chicago's CPC programs expanded through the PFS funding provided by the three ledners will be sustained through increases in federal, state, and local funding Chicago has committed to early childhood over the last 2 years. While classrooms will be maintained across the 9 schools, programming will be adapted based on the lessons learned. Many of the classrooms will be converted to full-day schedules, in line with the research and strategic plan for the District. SRI's outcome reports have consistently documented the increased efficacy of full-day programming over half-day programming in supporting children to achieve the kindergarten readiness metric. While still finalizing specific classroom make-up across the District for the 2018-19 school year, CPS intends to keep classrooms open and adapt the programming to be as effective as possible based on lessons learned.