

Preschoolers in Keystone STAR 3 and 4 programs make impressive progress, ready for kindergarten

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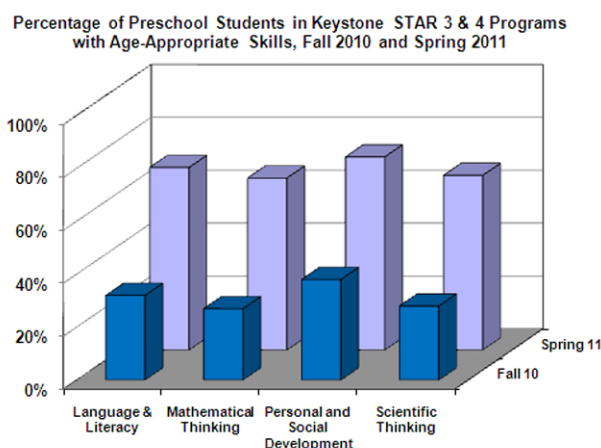
Nearly every preschooler (98%) in Keystone STAR 3 & 4 programs showed age-appropriate or emerging age-appropriate language, math, and social skills after attending a Keystone STARS program in 2010-2011.*

Keystone STARS promotes quality improvement among child care and Head Start programs through quality standards and targeted supports. Child care programs may enter Keystone STARS at the Start with STARS level and earn a STAR 1 through STAR 4 rating by meeting research-based standards for staff education and professional development, the early learning environment, and business management. Begun as a pilot program in 2002, Keystone STARS is now the largest quality early education program in Pennsylvania, serving children from birth through school-age in every county. As of March 2011, more than 4,200 child care programs (nearly 70% of centers) serving more than 165,000 children participate in Keystone STARS.

Children in Keystone STARS programs consistently make impressive gains in academic and social skills.

Less than one in three preschoolers began the school year in Keystone STAR 3 & 4 programs with age-appropriate skills. By the end of the school year, approximately two in three children showed age-appropriate language, math and social skills after attending Keystone STARS 3 & 4 programs in 2010-2011.*

- The percent of children who were proficient in **Language and Literacy** increased from 32% in Fall to 69% in Spring.
- The percent of children who were proficient in **Mathematical Thinking** increased from 27% in Fall to 65% in Spring.
- The percent of children who were proficient in **Personal and Social Development** increased from 38% in Fall to 73% in Spring.
- The percent of children who were proficient in **Scientific Thinking** increased from 28% in Fall to 66% in Spring.



This is the second year that Keystone STAR 3 and 4 programs have reported child outcomes, and outcomes for 2010-2011 are consistent with 2009-2010 outcomes.

Our daughter is very fortunate to benefit from such quality early childhood education at this Keystone STAR 4 program. We are so pleased to learn of all the wonderful adventures and learning activities she gets to participate in on a daily basis. She is able to interact with children and adults in many meaningful ways. This is particularly important to us starting at an early age - we wanted her to be exposed to diverse people, environments, and learning experiences. Even simple activities, like playing in fall leaves, help our daughter learn about the world around her.

Amber and John D., parents, Child Development Laboratory, Centre County

Parents rate high satisfaction with Keystone STARS and engage in their children's learning.

In a 2010 survey of more than 7,000 parents whose children attend a Keystone STAR 3 or 4 center, approximately 96% reported that the program and teachers' background and experience met their expectations and that information on their child's performance motivates them to support their child's learning and development at home.

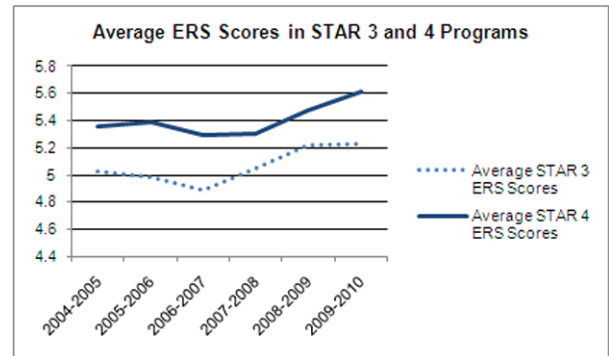
* Based on program reports for 13,039 children using an authentic assessment tool and reporting in the Early Learning Network.

Children's progress in Keystone STARS programs is a result of a commitment to quality.

Child care and Head Start programs that volunteer to participate in Keystone STARS have made a commitment beyond minimum certification standards to provide quality early childhood education to the children and families in their care.

- The number of STARS programs at STAR 3 and 4 has more than quadrupled since 2005-2006. As of March 2011, 978 programs have a Keystone STAR 3 or 4 rating, nearly 10% more than in March 2010.

The Office of Child Development (OCDEL) monitors compliance with program requirements through a system of reporting, site monitoring and classroom environment ratings. STARS Specialists conduct site visits to monitor programs and provide technical assistance and support for moving to the next STAR level. Independent assessors evaluate individual classrooms in STAR 3 and 4 programs using the nationally recognized Environment Rating Scales. Grantees also submit periodic reports of each child's progress.



- Both the number of assessments for classroom quality and the average Environment Rating Scales scores in STAR 3 and 4 programs have increased since 2004-2005.

Keystone STARS helps make quality early learning opportunities accessible to vulnerable families.

Families receive information on choosing quality early learning programs like Keystone STARS from their Child Care Information Services (CCIS) agency when they apply for Child Care Works subsidy, as well as a listing of some of the STARS programs in their community. As a result, approximately 52% of children receiving Child Care Works are enrolled in Keystone STARS programs.

Keystone STARS helps parents make the best choices for their children and family.

When looking for quality early learning programs, parents can use the Keystone STARS rating scale as a guide. With this information, parents can select the best early learning program for their child.

Our center has proudly been a member of Keystone STARS for five years. As the years of participation have increased, so has our staff enrollment for higher education in the early childhood field. We have learned how to properly observe and assess children, giving them a more individualized lesson plan where they can learn from every day experiences and challenges. Keystone STARS has even helped us collaborate with the local school district and utilize grants to generate staff and parent workshops, provide learning tools for the children, and ease the kindergarten transition for preschool children. It is a fact that Keystone STARS has GREATLY increased the academic and social performance of children in our center.

Kate Brahm, Bangor Child Care, Northampton County

Pennsylvania is providing families with a variety of quality early education choices.

Keystone STARS is part of a quality early education system serving children from birth to age five through school-age and their families to prepare Pennsylvania's children for success in school and in life. It is the combination of programs such as PA Pre-K Counts, Child Care Works, Head Start, Early Intervention, Full-Day Kindergarten, Nurse-Family Partnership, Keystone Babies and Parent-Child Home Program that provides the most effective results. For more information, visit www.dpw.state.pa.us.