

Child-Parent Centers (CPC)

Problem

A strong body of research shows that high-quality early childcare and preschool programs substantially improve low-income children's education, health, economic and life outcomes, as well as reduce the use of social services.¹ Many of these beneficial effects show up in the relatively short-term, while others continue to emerge over time.

Unfortunately, not all early care is high-quality, and many low-income children lack access to high-quality programs. Some research also suggests that academic gains from participation in early care may dissipate by later childhood, once children are in school.² Possible explanations for this “fade-out” effect include: a) the programs studied were in fact of mixed quality, and could be stronger academically; and/or b) where children transition from Pre-K programs into poor quality elementary schools, lack of continued and articulated support for early learning at school and at home leads to loss of skills.

Solution

Increase the likelihood that a vulnerable child will thrive both academically and in other ways by providing high-quality, comprehensive support to that child and their family from Pre-K through to 3rd grade. Research suggests that comprehensive programs can mitigate “fade-out” of academic progress and enhance learning gains.³

High Impact Opportunity

The Child-Parent Center program (CPC) provides comprehensive educational, family support, and healthcare services to economically disadvantaged children from ages 3-9. First developed in the 1960s, CPC initially launched in 25 sites in Chicago. The key goals were to improve school achievement, attendance, and parent engagement. Budget cuts over the next 40 years reduced that number to just 10 sites. In 2011, however, CPC was chosen from a competitive field and awarded a federal innovation (i3) grant to revise and reinvigorate the program in Chicago and expand to additional sites in the Midwest. Currently, CPC operates 26 sites and serves 5,100 children from predominately low-income families. In 2014, the City of Chicago announced it would finance expansion of CPC to an additional 2,600 children with a \$16.9 million social impact bond.⁴



Image provided by Child-Parent Centers

How it Works

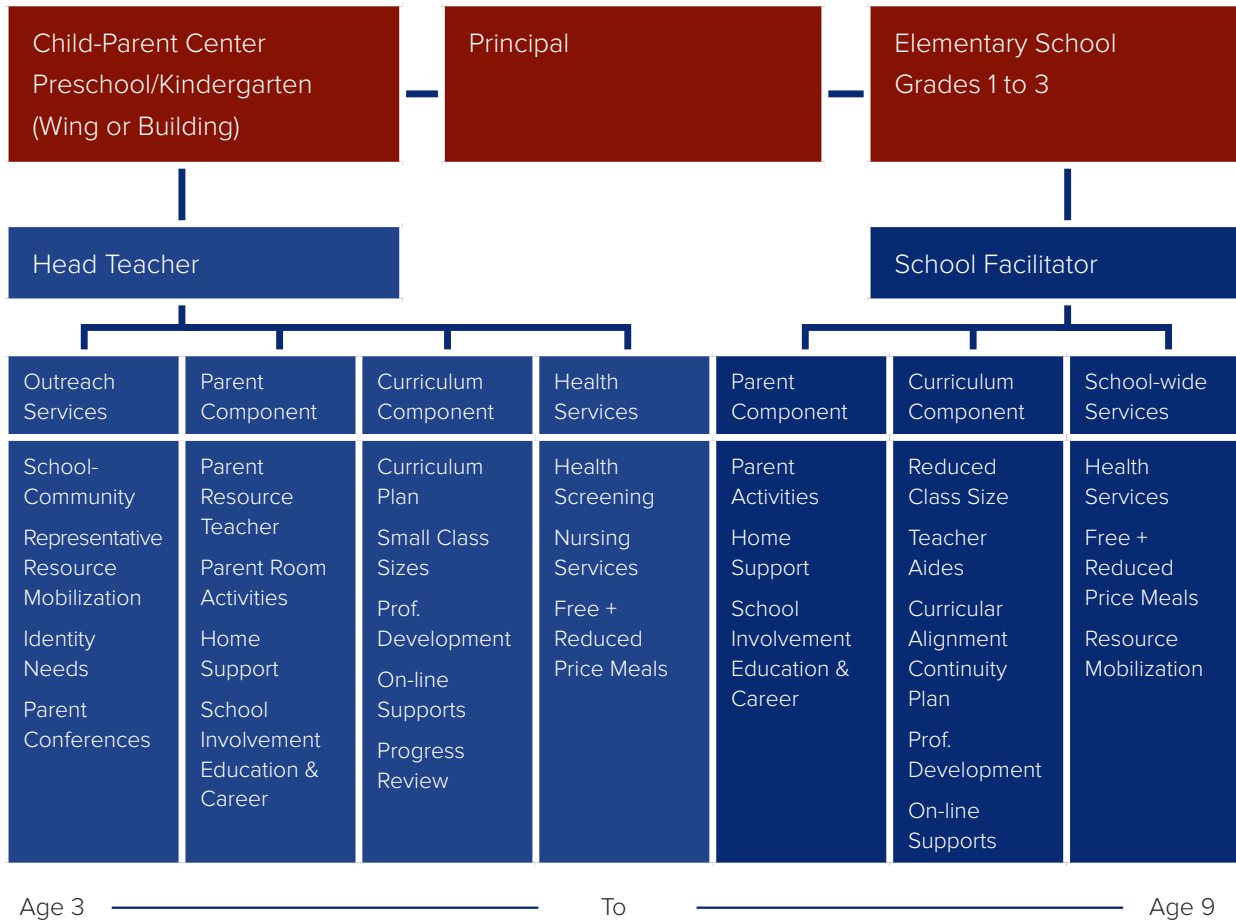
CPC provides early childhood to 3rd grade education services, including supports to parents and caregivers that strengthen a family's capacity to promote their child's success. The CPC model includes six core elements:

1. Effective learning experiences
2. Curriculum that is aligned from Pre-K through to 3rd grade classrooms
3. Collaborative leadership
4. Professional development
5. Parent involvement and engagement
6. A support system that provides continuity and stability to participating students

The hub of the program is the CPC itself, a physical space that hosts Pre-K and kindergarten classes and maintains a staffed Parent Resource room. In each CPC, a Head Teacher leads the program and coordinates delivery of a curriculum covering literacy, math, science, and socio-emotional development. From 1st through 3rd grades, CPC students matriculate into the program's partner elementary schools, but they maintain smaller class sizes and retain additional support. The Head Teacher works with a School Facilitator to ensure there is continuity in the delivery of the curricula and support services to students through their 3rd grade year. All staff that work with the CPC's students receive on-going professional development aimed at improving student outcomes.

Parents are deeply engaged in the program. They work with CPC staff to develop an involvement plan and calendar, and they commit to regular conferences to monitor their children's (and their own) progress. Parents also actively participate in Parent Resource programming such as health and nutrition services, medical screenings, school events, and classes in parenting and other life skills.

Figure 1 Child-Parent Centers, Pre-k to 3rd Grade



What’s the Impact?

The first major demonstration of CPC’s impact came from a landmark longitudinal study that began in 1985. Researchers tracked over 1,500 CPC participants and a comparison group of non-participants in Chicago over two decades, and found that program participation had substantial academic, health, and economic benefits.⁵ Participation in just the Pre-K portion of the program had the following benefits for students:

- 41% reduction in special education services
- 40% reduction in grade retention (when a child must repeat a grade in school)
- 29% increase in high school completion by age 20
- 33% reduction in juvenile arrests
- 51% reduction in court-reported child maltreatment

A second longitudinal study is currently underway in conjunction with CPC's Midwest expansion funded by the i3 grant. It will continue through 2017, but preliminary results are promising:⁶

- CPC students were assessed against a comparison group using the TS GOLD, a commonly used assessment of school readiness, which is divided into six subscales of school readiness characteristics. The total score of CPC students on all six subscales surpassed the comparison group by 27 points (286 vs. 259 in overall score). 69% of these CPC students scored at or above the national average on four or more of the subscales, compared to only 52% of the comparison group. Scoring close to the national mean is notable since low-income students generally score lower on measures of school readiness than their peers from middle and high-income families.
- CPC participants also had higher rates of parent involvement as rated by teachers.

Many of the findings from both studies suggest that the preschool portion of CPC alone is an effective intervention. But a key question relates to the “fade-out” effect: does longer participation in CPC make these benefits deeper or more persistent? It appears so. Compared to children who spent less time in the CPC program, those who completed four to six years in a CPC had higher overall educational attainment, and were less likely to need special education (35% reduction), experience abuse or neglect at home (33% reduction), or be arrested for violent offenses later in life (25% reduction).⁷

Additional Social Impact

Benefits to parents and caregivers: The CPC approach of deep family engagement is designed to go beyond the enrolled student. Indeed, enhancing educational attainment, career prospects, and personal development for parents is an explicit goal of the program. Services delivered through the Parent Resource room, such as professional development, nutrition and health classes, and parenting workshops, benefit parents and other family members as well.

What Does it Cost to Implement?

The annual cost per pupil of implementing a CPC Pre-K program is approximately \$1,950, which is an additional cost on top of the annual per pupil expenditure of each elementary school partner for Pre-K education services. The \$1,950 per pupil covers the cost of a CPC leadership team, ongoing professional development and coaching for teachers, parent/caregiver mentoring, and progress monitoring. This annual expense is funded by a mix of public grant funding, such as the i3, contributions from schools and school districts, and private philanthropic support.

The annual cost per pupil of implementing CPC's K through 3rd grade programming is approximately \$1,100, which is also an additional cost on top of the annual per pupil spending of the elementary school partner. These funds provide for a reduction in class sizes to 25 students per

2 adults maximum, and allow CPC staff to continue to coach teachers and offer parent/caregiver mentoring.

There can be start-up costs associated with the CPC program depending largely on the elementary school partner, which serves as the program's site. If the elementary school partner has an existing, full-day Pre-K program, conversion to the CPC Pre-K model involves no start-up costs. If the elementary school partner has only a part-day or no Pre-K program in place, initial costs can range from about \$3,600 to \$7,400 per pupil. This additional cost is incurred by the school partner, who typically applies for public Pre-K subsidies and public education funding grants from local, state and federal government agencies.

Cost per Impact

An additional child can participate in CPC for five years (Pre-K through 3rd grade) for a cost of between \$6,330 and \$13,683. The high range reflects start-up costs where CPCs partnered with elementary schools that did not previously offer Pre-K to students.

Representative impacts:

- ***Improved academic and social outcomes for children and their families:*** Compared to peer groups, CPC students are better prepared for kindergarten, more likely to achieve academically, more likely to graduate high school, and less likely to experience maltreatment.
- ***Societal cost savings:*** Compared to peer groups, students who participate in CPC programming are less likely to need special education services or grade retention, which considerably reduces the cost of educating these students. For example, in 2013 dollars, the average cost of special education per child per year in Chicago is \$15,622 above and beyond the cost of regular instruction.⁸ CPC students are also less likely to be arrested for violent crimes, which generates savings for the criminal justice system.

For additional information on linking cost and impact, click [here](#).

Take Action

Visit the [Human Capital Research Collaborative](#) (HCRC) for more information about the Midwest expansion of the CPC model, to review the latest results, or to contact CPC staff. Click [here](#) for suggestions of other programs that provide kids with great places to learn.

SNAPSHOT

CORE PRACTICE: Minimize “fade-out” of academic gains children make in early care and Pre-K by providing them and their families with comprehensive educational and social services through their 3rd grade year.

TARGETED BENEFICIARIES: Children ages 3-9 (predominantly low-income) and their families.

IMPACT ACHIEVED: Improvements in academic and social outcomes for children and their families (e.g., increases in school readiness scores and parent involvement, decreases in incidences of child maltreatment), and cost savings to society (e.g., decreases in special education services, grade retention, and juvenile arrests).

COST/IMPACT OR COST-BENEFIT: An additional child can participate in CPC from Pre-K through 3rd grade for a cost of between \$6,330 and \$13,683.

¹ Two notable examples are the [Abecedarian](#) project and the [Perry Preschool](#) project.

² Especially the 3rd-grade follow-up to the Head Start RCT. For more information, see: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation. (2012). Third grade follow-up to the Head Start impact study: final report (2012-45). Retrieved from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/head_start_report.pdf

³ See p16 of this review: Reynolds, A., Magnuson, K., Ou, S. (2006). PK-3 education: programs and practices that work in children's first decade. (FCD Working Paper: Advancing PK-3 No. 6). Retrieved from <https://www.pakeys.org/uploadedcontent/docs/PK%203%20education%20Programs%20and%20practices%20that%20work%20in%20childrens%20first%20decade.pdf>

⁴ Human Capital Research Collaborative (2004). Chicago's social impact bond for child-parent centers expands a proven school reform model. Retrieved from [https://humancapitalrc.org/~media/files/news/sib_chicago_summary.pdf?la=en](https://humancapitalrc.org/~/media/files/news/sib_chicago_summary.pdf?la=en)

Note: The social impact bond will support the expansion of part-day preschool programs for 2600 students, and evidence of the effectiveness of part-day care on students' school readiness was not as strong as that of full-day programs according to CPC reports.

For more on social impact bonds, see our funder brief *Patching the Quilt: Early Childhood Policy and Finance for Donors*.

⁵ Reynolds, A.J., Richardson, B., Hayakawa, C.M., Lease, E.M., Warner-Richter, M., Englund, M.M., Sullivan, M. (2014) Early childhood intervention, school readiness, and parenting behavior: effects by dosage and subgroups in an urban scale up. Institute of Child Development & Human Capital Research Collaborative, University of Minnesota.

⁶ Reynolds, A.J., Richardson, B., Hayakawa, C.M., Lease, E.M., Warner-Richter, M., Englund, M.M...Sullivan, M. (2011) Early childhood intervention, school readiness, and parenting behavior: effects by dosage and subgroups in an urban scale up. Institute of Child Development & Human Capital Research Collaborative, University of Minnesota.

⁷ Reynolds, A.J., Temple, J.A., Robertson, D.L., Mann, E.A. (2002) Age 21 cost-benefit analysis of the Title I Chicago child-parent centers. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 24. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3594119>

⁸ Reynolds, A. J., et al. Journal of the American Medical Association, Nov. 26, 2014; 312(20), 2126-2134. <http://us3.campaign-archive2.com/?u=84796659d01d893c2c4051af78&id=036741fb50&e=5456b69124>



3815 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104

WEBSITE www.impact.upenn.edu
EMAIL impact@sp2.upenn.edu
PHONE (215) 573-7266

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