



Office of Child Development and Early Learning
Pennsylvania Departments of Education and Public Welfare

Program Reach and Risk Assessment
State Fiscal Year 2008-2009
Updated April 2010

OCDEL Program Reach and Risk Assessment Report 2008-2009 *Updated April 2010*

Table of Contents

Letter from the Secretaries	2
Executive Summary	3
I. Introduction	5
II. Methodology	5
III. Findings	9
A. County Analysis	9
B. City Analysis	11
C. Program by Program Analysis	12
o Pennsylvania Nurse-Family Partnership	
o Parent-Child Home Program	
o Head Start State and Federal	
o Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts	
o Accountability Block Grants	
o School-Based Pre-K Program	
o Early Intervention	
o Keystone STARS	
o Pre K Counts Public-Private Partnership	
o Child Care Works	
o Early Childhood Community Engagement Groups	
o Title I Funding for Pre-K Through 2 nd Grade	
IV. Future Directions and Limitations of Use	15

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Please note: This report and spreadsheets of county and city data are available online at www.education.state.pa.us and www.pakeys.org.



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE
P.O. Box 2675
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120-2675
PHONE (717) 787-2600
FAX (717) 772-2062

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17126-0333
PHONE (717) 783-9780
FAX (717) 787-7222

April 28, 2010

We are pleased to provide you with the 2008-2009 Program Reach and Risk Assessment report published by the Office of Child Development and Early Learning. This report provides valuable information on the state of early learning throughout the Commonwealth that can provide our young children – and our Commonwealth – with a brighter future. Our children – especially our at-risk children – need access to quality early learning opportunities in order to succeed in school and in life. This report helps us identify our highest risk communities and determine how many children we are reaching with our quality early education programs.

This year, reach data is also provided for infants & toddlers (birth – age two), preschoolers, (ages three – four) and all children under age five.

Here are some key findings from the report.

Children in three-quarters (76%) of Pennsylvania's counties are at moderate-high to high risk of school failure. According to the report, children in 14 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties are at high risk of school failure, and children in 37 counties are at moderate-high risk of school failure. These counties are in every part of the Commonwealth and represent urban, suburban and rural communities.

Approximately one-third (35%) of Pennsylvania's children from birth to age five participate in publicly-funded quality early childhood programs, which include Nurse-Family Partnership, Parent Child Home Program, Head Start State and Federal, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, PA Pact for Pre-K, School Based Pre-K, Early Intervention, and Keystone STARS.

Of all the state investments, most children are being reached through the Keystone STARS program, which provides service to 15% of children from birth to age five. Currently, 65% of regulated child care centers statewide participate in STARS.

Children served in state and federally funded early childhood programs are funded at the rate of approximately \$3,073 per child, an amount which is significantly less than the cost of providing a quality early education experience that produces positive outcomes for children, families and communities.

Investing in Pennsylvania's quality early education initiatives can help all of Pennsylvania's children enter school ready to learn. Reports on positive child outcomes from programs such as Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts show that children who enter quality early education programs developmentally behind their peers can catch up during their early years and enter kindergarten with the skills they need to do well in school. As you review this information, I hope you will see, as we do, that investment in quality early learning opportunities needs to be a priority for Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

Harriet Dichter
Secretary of Public Welfare

Gerald L. Zahorchak, D.Ed.
Secretary of Education

Enclosure

Executive Summary

One of the most important ways to help children reach their potential and succeed is through quality early education. Quality early education opportunities are especially important for children affected by conditions that make them at risk to fail in school. When children affected by risk factors such as living in low income families or low education level of the mother have access to quality early education before age five, these children can often make up for setbacks in their development, enabling them to enter kindergarten on par with their peers.

Children who are encouraged and supported through quality early childhood education demonstrate significant progress in acquiring early learning skills and may save schools money for special education and remediation costs. These children are more likely to graduate from high school, to attend college or quality job training programs, and be valuable members of the workforce. The benefits of quality early education to children and families translate into a more competitive workforce and greater tax base, while reducing public expenses in special education costs, public assistance, crime control and lost taxes.

It is in Pennsylvania's best interest to invest in quality early education because will provide our communities with benefits for years to come, but it is important that these investments are strategically made to provide the greatest return possible for the commonwealth with our limited resources.

In order to support sound programmatic and investment decisions regarding the distribution of early education services, the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) annually compiles the Program Reach and Risk Report. This report provides county- as well as city-specific information on the level of risk for school failure for children (based on seven risk factors) and the availability, or reach, of most OCDEL programs to children in each county and in the 27 largest cities in Pennsylvania. This is the third year of the report.

To enhance the Reach and Risk report, OCDEL includes a breakdown of reach of programs by infant/toddlers (birth – two years); preschool (ages three and four; and all children under age five served.

OCDEL's Program Reach and Risk Assessment for fiscal year 2008-2009 shows that Pennsylvania continues to make progress serving young children, but still experiences gaps in serving children who could benefit the most from a quality early education experience, especially serving infants and toddlers.

Risk

- **Children are at risk of school failure throughout the commonwealth.** Of the 67 counties, children in 51 (76%) counties are at moderate-high or high risk of school failure; of the 27 largest cities, children in 24 (89%) are at moderate-high or high risk of school failure. Every community has children affected by risk factors for school failure. For example, approximately one-third of children in Pennsylvania (37%) under age five are living in low-income families; each county has at least 15% of its children under age five living in low-income families. In 20 of our 27 largest cities, more than half of the children under age five live in low income families.

Reach

- **Approximately one-third (35%) of children under age five participate in state and/or federally funded quality early childhood education programs.** In the commonwealth's 27 largest cities, more than half (56%) of children under age five participate in state and/or federally funded quality early childhood programs. Quality programs are defined as: Nurse-Family Partnership, Parent Child Home Program, Head Start State and Federal, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, PA Pact for Pre-K, School Based Pre-K, Early Intervention, and Keystone STARS.
- **Reach by county is greatest for Keystone STARS (15%), Early Intervention (11%) and Head Start (5%),** These programs are the only direct impact programs for children under the age of five to reach children in all 67 counties.
- **Reach is greatest across the commonwealth for Keystone STARS.** Of all the state investments, most children were reached through the Keystone STARS program, which provides service to 15% of children from birth to age five. Three percent of children under age five in Pennsylvania were served in STAR 3 and 4 programs. As of May 2009, there were 4,282 child care providers within the Keystone STARS system, covering all counties and reaching an estimated 107,546 children under age five.
- **Less than one-fifth (19%) of Pennsylvania's infants and toddlers participate in quality early education programs.** Among children under age three statewide, in 2008-2009 approximately 10% were served by Keystone STARS, 0.5% were served by Early Head Start, and 7% were served by Early Intervention.
- **Approximately half (55%) of Pennsylvania's preschoolers (three and four year olds) are served in state and/or federally funded quality early childhood programs.** Twenty-two percent of three and four year olds were served by Keystone STARS, 11% were served by state and federal Head Start, and 10% were served by Early Intervention.

Investment in quality early childhood education

- **Pennsylvania's investment per child served under the age of five is \$3,073 annually.** Children receiving service in these state and federally funded early childhood programs are funded at the rate of approximately \$3,073 per child served, an amount which is significantly less than the cost of providing a quality early education experience that produces positive outcomes for children, families and communities. In general, the national cost for a five hour day at 180 days a year for a pre-kindergarten program is \$8,700 per child. This represents a gap in our public investment to achieve the most positive results for children.

The quality of a child's early education affects their learning for life. By understanding the needs of our young children across the commonwealth and the reach of our early childhood programs, Pennsylvania can make smarter investments in a brighter future.

I. Introduction

The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) is committed to providing early childhood services to Pennsylvania's young children, with special attention to those at risk of school failure. Research consistently shows that children at risk of school failure benefit from quality early learning opportunities, with economic and educational benefits that extend to our families, communities, and the commonwealth. This report provides information about how well the commonwealth is reaching its young children with quality early learning services, with special attention to at-risk children for Fiscal Year End 2008-2009. The report:

- includes an analysis of educational and family risk factors that can harm a child's chances of doing well in school;
- compiles information on the number of children served through OCDEL programs;
- shows the funding levels for early childhood programs supported by state and federal investments; and
- identifies counties and cities most likely to benefit from early childhood investments, based on these risk factors.

This data can be used to: 1) track progress in reaching all children who can benefit most from early education; 2) help communities better understand their early childhood programming needs, particularly in counties where there are high risks; 3) educate lawmakers on Pennsylvania's progress in early childhood education; and 4) inform future decisions regarding early childhood education investments, policies and practices.

There are several new additions to the OCDEL Risk and Reach Report this year, including information on Accountability to Commonwealth Taxpayers (ACT) funding and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding of Early Intervention for preschool. School age children are no longer included in counts for Early Intervention, Child Care Works and Keystone STARS. Also highlighted for the first time is the reach within the commonwealth for the population of infants and toddlers, ages birth to three.

The 2008-2009 PA Reach and Risk Assessment was revised in April 2010 as planned to include complete 2008-2009 data for all programs. Four programs, Nurse-Family Partnership, Parent Child Home Program, Head Start and Pennsylvania's Pact for Pre-K, did not have full year 2008-2009 data available at the time of publication in October 2009 and so mid-year data was used for many programs in the original publication of this report.

II. Methodology

All data is provided in the Excel workbook titled "ECE_Analysis_June_2009_R" and "ECE_Analysis_June_2009_Municipalities_R" which are available on the Pennsylvania Department of Education website at www.education.state.pa.us and Pennsylvania Key website at www.pakeys.org.

The data was compiled in four stages: 1) Gathering relevant information about state-funded early childhood program usage by county¹; 2) Gathering economic, family and education risk

¹ It is important to note that this data contains duplicated children, and a child participating in more than one OCDEL program is counted more than once. OCDEL is developing an Early Learning Network to address this issue so that this future material will report counts of unduplicated children.

factors and compiling information on the number or percentage of children in various risk categories by county; 3) Developing an Average Risk Level (ARL) to identify those counties with the greatest risks; and 4) Combining the ARL information with the state-funded early childhood program usage information to identify county use by risk. Descriptions of the four stages of data collection are provided below, along with information about where to find the data in the supporting data files. The same methodology is applied to the city-level data.

Gathering relevant information

Program enrollment and funding data for fiscal year 2008-2009 was collected and compiled for state-administered education programs for children under five years of age. For some programs a one-month snapshot is presented using end of fiscal year data². Programs are listed below and arranged by the age cohort served, starting with those focusing on infants and toddlers, those serving children through preschool, and finally those programs serving mixed age-groups. They are also separated into two modes of service: direct and indirect impact. *Direct impact* programs are those for which dollars directly support quality early childhood education. *Indirect impact* programs are those which operate through community and school level systems that support quality and access to quality early childhood education and care.

- a. Direct Impact Programs
 - i. Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) (Tab 6)³
 - ii. Parent-Child Home Program (PCHP) (Tab 7)
 - iii. Head Start State and Federal (Tab 8)
 - iv. Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts (Tab 9)
 - v. PA Pact for Pre-K (ABG and ACT) (Tab 10)
 - vi. School Based Pre-K (Tab 11)
 - vii. Early Intervention (Tab 12)
 - viii. Keystone STARS (Tab 13)
- b. Indirect Impact Programs
 - i. Pre-K Counts Public/Private Partnership (Tab 14)
 - ii. Child Care Works/Subsidy (Tab 15)
 - iii. Community Engagement Group, and (Tab 16)
 - iv. Title I Funding for Pre-K through 2nd Grade (Tab 17)

² See Excel workbooks for data sources.

³ Tabs for city-level data are slightly different.

Economic, Family, and Education Risk Indicators⁴

Economic, family and educational risk indicators were identified and county level data was collected on each indicator. The seven risk indicators chosen for inclusion in the risk analysis model include (Tab 18 and Tab 20):

- a. **Percent of families with related children under age five living below poverty level** (2000 US Census)
Research shows potential efforts to support early childhood and school readiness may include outreach to families in poverty. Thus, a family measure of poverty was included, in addition to the actual child rates, to identify counties that had high numbers of families living in poverty. (2000 US Census defines “poverty” as below 100% of federal poverty level, which was equivalent to \$17,029 for a family of four in 2000.)
- b. **Percent of children under age five living in low income families** (2000 US Census)
Research shows children who are low income or living in poverty are more likely to have poor nutrition, chronic health problems, and be less prepared for and have more difficulty in school. (2000 US Census defines “low income” as below 200% of federal poverty level, which was equivalent to \$34,058 for a family of four in 2000⁵.)
- c. **Percent of children receiving aid through Technical Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)⁶** (2006 KIDS Count)
This measure was included to identify counties that have high rates of use of government assistance. This indicates a risk factor to children, as well as an incentive to quality care, as long-term outcomes of some quality early childhood programs demonstrate reduced use of welfare during adulthood.
- d. **Percent of related children born to young and single mothers** (2007 KIDS Count)
Research shows that children living with both biological parents are less likely to exhibit behavior problems, and children living with married parents are less likely to experience economic hardship (Golden 2005). Women who are single parents, as well as those who cohabit with their child’s other parent, tend to have lower educational attainment, lower income, and higher rates of child abuse and domestic violence than married women (Whitehead and Popenoe, 2004).
- e. **Percent of births to mothers with less than a high school degree** (2007 Pennsylvania Department of Health)
Children who live with parents who have a low education level are less likely to receive cognitive stimulation and high quality child care during crucial development periods, and are more likely to have diminished reading skills.
- f. **PSSA: Percent below proficient in 3rd grade math** (2009 Pennsylvania Department of Education)
Educational indicators predict risk for poor long-term education outcomes. Over time, early childhood investments should demonstrate improved academic outcomes.

⁴ The reach data is for the 2008-2009 fiscal year; however the risk indicators may or may not be from this fiscal year. Currently, the Rate of children under age five living in low income families, Percent of families with related children under age five living below poverty level, and Percent of single mother-headed families with children under age five living below poverty level are from the 2000 Census Data. The Percent of children receiving aid through TANF, Rate of births to mothers with less than a high school degree and the PSSA scores are updated annually. City reach data are calculated either by city or by zip codes which comprise a city.

⁵ For current Federal Poverty Guidelines, please visit <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/09poverty.shtml>

⁶ The percentage of children receiving aid through TANF could only be determined at the county level. City level data reflect the same percentage as for the whole county.

- g. PSSA: Percent below proficient in 3rd grade reading** (2009 Pennsylvania Department of Education)
Educational indicators predict risk for poor long-term education outcomes. Over time, early childhood investments should demonstrate improved academic outcomes.

County and City Ranking with Risk Indicators

Each of the risk indicators is presented in the data file as a percentage, allowing for comparison across counties of varying population sizes. The percentages were placed into four equal sized groups called quartiles, each containing 25% of the counties. A rating of one (low risk) to four (high risk) was then given to each quartile for each risk factor; the top 25% were considered to be high risk and the bottom 25% were low risk. The sums of the risk factors for each county were averaged to determine an overall Average Risk Level (ARL). This is the average quartile ranking for a county across the risk indicators. The ARLs were then classified so that the counties with the highest ARL received a high-risk ranking, and counties with the lowest ARL for children were deemed low risk (Tab 19 and Tab 20). The same methodology was also applied to the city rankings.

Analyzing Results

After all program and indicator data was compiled, the results were analyzed in conjunction with county risk level to determine the extent to which early childhood programming and funding has been targeted to those counties and cities with the greatest need, or highest ARL (Tab 1 and Tab 2). Using these comparisons, future recommendations for additional investments can be determined.

Intervention, and Keystone STARS) are reaching 35.4% of children under age five statewide.

Children are being served in both rural and urban communities. Approximately 36.2% of young children are served in publicly-funded quality early education programs in rural and rural mix counties, while 35.1% of young children in urban and urban mix counties are being served.

Program reach is greatest in the high risk counties (43%), and slightly lower for moderate-high, moderate-low and low risk counties, where programs reached 34%, 32% and 28% of children under five respectively.

Of all the state investments, most children are being reached through the Keystone STARS program, which provides service to 15% of children from birth to five years. Seven percent of children under five in Pennsylvania are served in the STAR 2 facilities and 3% are served in STAR 3 and 4 facilities (see Tab 5).

- **Early Childhood Program Usage by Children from Birth to Age Three**

When considering the subset of infants and toddlers, 19% of birth to three year olds statewide are served in quality early childhood education settings that include Nurse-Family Partnership, Parent-Child Home Program, Early Head Start, Early Intervention Infant Toddler and Keystone STARS for children ages birth to three (Tab 3).

Of all the state investments, most infants and toddlers are being reached through the Keystone STARS program, which provides service to an estimated 9% of children ages birth to three.

- **Early Childhood Program Usage by Children Ages Three and Four**

When considering the subset of preschool age children, 55% of three and four year olds statewide are served in quality early childhood education settings that include Parent-Child Home Program, Head Start State and Federal, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, PA Pact for Pre-K, School Based Pre-K, Early Intervention Preschool, and Keystone STARS for children ages 3 & 4 (Tab 4).

Of all the state investments, most children are being reached through the Keystone STARS program, which provides service to an estimated 22% of children ages three and four.

- **Early Childhood Program Funding (FY 2008-2009)**

Children served in state and federally funded early childhood programs are funded at the rate of \$3,073 **per child served** (Tab 5). Dividing the total program funding (for Nurse-Family Partnership, Parent-Child Home Program, Head Start State and Federal, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, PA Pact for Pre-K, School Based Pre-K, Early Intervention, and Keystone STARS) by the number of children under age five, Pennsylvania is spending \$1,087 **per child in Pennsylvania**.

The per child funding rate is slightly higher in rural and rural-mix counties as compared to urban and urban-mix counties. The funding amount in rural areas is \$3,618 per child served, and in urban areas the amount is \$2,916. Please note that

the percentage of children served is the same across county classification as stated in the first bullet.

Generally, funding has been targeted at counties with the greatest risk. Eleven of the 14 high risk communities are receiving funding greater than the statewide funding per child. Berks, Dauphin, and Mifflin are the high risk counties that are spending less than the statewide average.

Of the 10 highest spending-per-child counties, two were high risk (Greene and Clearfield), six were moderate-high risk (Forest, Sullivan, Fulton, Wyoming, Montour and Susquehanna), and two were moderate-low risk (Cameron and Wayne). All of these counties were classified as rural or rural-mix.

B. City Analysis

City Level Findings on Risk Level

Twenty seven percent of Pennsylvania's children under age five live in the commonwealth's 27 largest cities. Children living in these cities tend to be at higher risk of school failure than those in the rest of their counties. Out of the 27 largest cities, none are considered low risk. The risk levels of the cities are:

- Moderate-Low Risk: Bethlehem Park, Plum, State College
- Moderate-High Risk: Easton, Monroeville, Norristown, Pottstown, Scranton, West Mifflin
- High Risk: Allentown, Altoona, Bethlehem, Chester, Erie, Harrisburg, Hazelton, Johnstown, Lancaster, Lebanon, McKeesport, New Castle, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Reading, Wilkes-Barre, Williamsport, York

City Findings on Reach

- **Early Childhood Program Usage by Pennsylvania's 27 Largest Cities**

On average, state and federally funded quality early childhood programs (Nurse-Family Partnership, Parent-Child Home Program, Head Start State and Federal, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, PA Pact for Pre-K, School Based Pre-K, Early Intervention, and Keystone STARS) are reaching 56% of children under age five in the 27 largest cities in the commonwealth.

Program reach is greatest in the high risk cities (57%), and slightly lower for moderate-high (53%) and moderate-low risk (25%) cities.

Of all the state investments, most children are being reached through the Keystone STARS program, which averages service to 21% of children under age five. An average of 5% of children under age five are served in the STAR 3 and 4 facilities in these cities.

- **Early Childhood Program Usage by Children Ages Three and Four**

Twenty-seven percent of Pennsylvania's three and four years live within the commonwealth's 27 largest cities (Tab 3). Among preschool age children, 93% of three and four year olds within the 27 largest cities are served in quality early childhood education programs that include Parent-Child Home Program, Head Start, Pennsylvania

Pre-K Counts, PA Pact for Pre-K, School Based Pre-K, Early Intervention and Keystone STARS.⁷

Of all the state investments, most children are being reached through the Keystone STARS program, which averages service to 31% of children ages three and four in these cities.

C. Program by Program Analysis

Direct Impact Programs for Children under age five in Pennsylvania

- **Nurse-Family Partnership**

Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP), a program which provides registered nurses who work with expectant mothers, has been used to ensure healthy pregnancy, promote early literacy, and to encourage school readiness by helping mothers learn how to promote healthy child development. (Tab 6) Pregnant women who are low-income, first-time mothers and who enroll by the 28th week of pregnancy are eligible. Nurse-Family Partnership only serves children from birth to age two.

Nurse-Family Partnership has reached 40 of the 67 counties in Pennsylvania (Tab 6). This program serves 4,449 children, which is 1% of the infants and toddlers in Pennsylvania. Half of the high risk counties are served by NFP.

Three quarters of the children served by Nurse-Family Partnership lived in major cities. NFP has reached 23 of the 27 largest cities in Pennsylvania. Among the cities that received Nurse-Family Partnership Grants, 4,301 infants and toddlers were served (3%).

- **Parent-Child Home Program**

Parent-Child Home Program (PCHP) provides a home visitor to help parents learn how to read and play with their children in a way that promotes early learning and builds a positive parent-child bond (Tab 7). Families of at-risk children who enroll their children between 18 months and two years of age and agree to participate for two years are eligible.

Parent-Child Home Program has been used to promote early literacy and school readiness in 26 counties throughout the state. PCHP has reached 1,600 children, which is 0.2% of children under age five. Five of the counties that use Parent-Child Home Program are high risk counties.

Parent-Child Home Program has been used to promote early literacy and school readiness in nine of the 27 largest cities throughout the state, serving 623 children. Seven of the cities that use Parent-Child Home Program are high risk cities.

- **Head Start State and Federal**

Head Start provides free, comprehensive early learning services to children & families most at risk of academic failure (Tab 8). Families earning 130% of the federal poverty level or less are eligible to apply.

⁷ Please note that this statistic like others reported in this document is based on multiple counting of children who are enrolled in multiple programs.

The Head Start State and Federal program has reached 33,558 children across all 67 counties in Pennsylvania. This is 5% of all children under age five.

There were a total of 63 agencies in 59 counties administering Head Start services in the state through the Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program, reaching 5,738 students. There were 29 agencies in all of the 27 largest cities administering federal and state Head Start services, reaching 14,829 students.

- **Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts**

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts provides high quality pre-kindergarten opportunities to three and four year olds at no cost to families (Tab 9). Children from age three until the entry age for kindergarten are eligible to apply. Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts targets children at risk of school failure, either because of income, language or special needs.

In FY 2008-2009, there were 155 agencies in 62 counties administering Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts services in the state, reaching 11,841 students. Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts reached all high risk counties.

There were 59 agencies in all of the 27 largest cities administering Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts services in the state, reaching 5,878 students.

- **Pennsylvania's Pact for Pre-K (ABG and ACT)**

Pennsylvania's Pact for Pre-K is a way to provide additional investment to school districts that can be used for early childhood programs (Tab 10). Accountability Block Grants (ABG) and Accountability for Commonwealth Taxpayers (ACT) funds have been used for quality Pre-K programming in 29 counties throughout the state.

Seven of the counties that use PA Pact for Pre-K funds are high risk counties. Overall, counties using PA Pact for Pre-K funds reached 4,476 children under age five through ABG and ACT programs.

PA Pact for Pre-K funds have been used in 11 of the 27 largest cities throughout the state, reaching 3,295 students. Nine of these 11 cities using ABG and ACT funds for Pre-K are high risk cities.

- **School Based Pre-K Program**

School Based Pre-K Programs offer programs for three and four year old children from two-and-a-half to five hours a day, for a minimum of 180 days (Tab 11).

School Based Pre-K programs deliver quality Pre-K programming in 48 counties throughout the state. Generally, School Based Pre-K programs were serving a greater percentage of children on average in high risk counties and moderate-high risk counties. Eleven of the 48 counties that use School Based Pre-K are high risk counties.

School Based Pre-K programs deliver quality Pre-K programming in 16 of the 27 largest cities throughout the state. Thirteen of the cities that use School Based Pre-K are high risk cities.

- **Early Intervention**

Early Intervention provides children from birth to age five who have disabilities/developmental delays with services to help promote their development so they are successful in any early education setting (Tab 12). Services may include parent education, development therapies, and other support services.

Early Intervention is offered in every county in the state, reaching 8% of children under five and additional school aged children. Among the top five counties in terms of reach, or those serving more than 16% of the population under age five, two (Elk and Cameron) are moderate-low risk, two (Clarion and Forest) are moderate-high risk and one (McKean) is high risk. All five are rural counties.

Early Intervention reached 13% of children under age five in the 27 largest cities in Pennsylvania.

- **Keystone STARS (May 2009)**

Keystone STARS promotes quality in child care and Head Start programs (Tab 13). Programs that participate in Keystone STARS begin at Start with STARS and can earn a STAR 1 to STAR 4 level based on quality standards.

As of May 2009, there were 4,282 child care providers within the Keystone STARS system, covering all counties and reaching an estimated 107,546 (15%) children under age five in the commonwealth. Sixty-five percent of regulated child care centers participated in Keystone STARS and 49% of regulated child care facilities participated in Keystone STARS overall.

Keystone STARS was the state-funded early childhood initiative that reached the greatest number of young children. STAR 3 and STAR 4 sites are considered higher quality settings that research has related to positive child outcomes. The analysis showed that approximately 3% of children under age five are served in these high quality programs.

Twenty one of the 27 largest cities served more children under age five than the state average (15%) in Keystone STARS.

In addition to serving children from birth to age five, Keystone STARS programs also serve children from age five to age 12 (considered “school-age” children), often in wrap-around care before or after school. In 2008-2009, Keystone STARS programs served approximately 155,396 children from birth to age 12.

Indirect Impact Programs for Children under Five in Pennsylvania

- **Pre-K Counts Public-Private Partnership**

Pre-K Counts Public-Private Partnership funds seven counties to build pre-kindergarten partnerships among school districts, Head Start, child care, and Early Intervention (Tab 14). Overall, 1,334 children were reached through the programs, with the greatest number of students served in Westmoreland (378) and Luzerne (440) counties.

- **Child Care Works⁸** (June 2009)
Child Care Works is the subsidized child care program that provides financial help to pay for child care for families who meet work and income requirements (Tab 15). To be eligible, families must earn 200% of the federal poverty level or less and must meet certain work requirements.

In the month of June 2009 subsidies were provided to 60,402 children under age five. Children ages five to 12 also receive Child Care Works subsidy. In this month, Child Care Works served a total of 116,805 children including school-age children. Approximately 8% of all children under five receive Child Care Works subsidy.

- **Early Childhood Community Engagement Groups**
Early Childhood Community Engagement Groups (CEG) develop and implement county outreach efforts to engage and inform key stakeholders about the benefits of quality early learning programs (Tab 16). Additionally, CEGs facilitate linkages between school districts, early learning programs and other stakeholders to support successful kindergarten transition.

All of the counties within the commonwealth had CEGs except Carbon county in 2008-2009.

- **Title I Funding for Pre-K through 2nd Grade**
Title I Funding for Pre-K through 2nd Grade was a source of funding for the School Based Pre-K Program based on the percentage of low income children within the school district (Tab 17). Title I is not considered a direct impact program because the school districts can use the funds for children in Pre-K through second grade.

Only six counties within the commonwealth did not receive Title I Funding. All of these counties were rural.

IV. Future Directions and Limitations of Use

The Office of Child Development and Early Learning is using the program Risk and Reach analysis data to better tailor supports to communities. This compilation of information is shared to better inform and educate communities to consider appropriate and effective early childhood investments. In future editions, through further refinement of the data, OCDEL will be able to determine the number of unduplicated children served across the commonwealth. In future years, Risk and Reach will distinguish Early Intervention allocations by age of child, which will allow OCDEL to remove school aged EI children from the statewide count of children served.

Feedback is welcome on this data, analysis, and report, as this will be an evolving project that will adjust to meet usage demands. If you have suggestions or would like to share how your community used the information, please contact the Office of Child Development and Early Learning, at 717-346-9320 or via email at RA-dpwocdnet@state.pa.us.

⁸ Children ages 5 to 12 also receive Child Care Works subsidy. In June 2009, Child Care Works served a monthly average of 60,402 children (birth – age 5), and approximately 116,805 unduplicated children from birth to age 12.