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ABSTRACT

The Illinois Prekindergarten Program for Children at Risk of Academic Failure was a grant program for public school districts to enhance growth and development of children ages 3 to 5 who are at risk of academic failure. The program has experienced significant growth since its initial implementation, and the number of participating projects increased 13 percent compared to FY 92. This report presents a review and evaluation of the Illinois Prekindergarten At-Risk Program for the 1992-1993 school year. The evaluation ranked children's academic performance in reading, mathematics, language, and behavior. The report describes child characteristics according to each child's ethnicity, family structure, health, primary language, free-lunch status, and any previous preschool experiences. In addition, the projects' characteristics are described in terms of eligibility requirements, instructional settings, educational staff, teacher-child ratio, collaboration with other programs and agencies, and parent participation and involvement. Findings suggest that the program has had a positive influence on students' kindergarten readiness and that performance levels have been sustained in the early elementary grades. Based on the evaluation results, recommendations include: (1) the state should continue to expand the program to include all at-risk children; (2) the at-risk program should continue to emphasize the role of parents; and (3) the state should increase funding to make services available to more children. Four appendices contain the State Board of Education policy statement on early childhood education, the School Code of Illinois, data tables and figures on scores and funds, four references, and a map of Illinois showing the number of projects and number of children served in each county in FY93. (AP)

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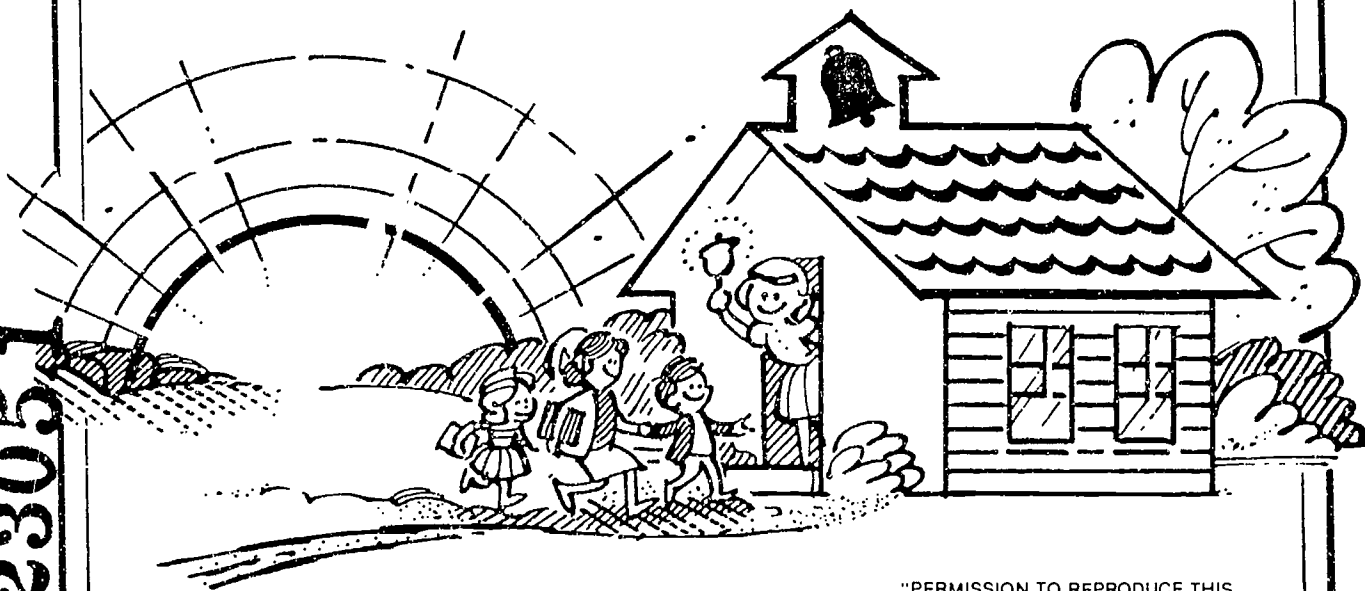
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ILLINOIS PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN AT RISK OF ACADEMIC FAILURE

FY 93 SUMMARY REPORT



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**ILLINOIS PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM
FOR CHILDREN AT RISK OF ACADEMIC FAILURE
FY 93 SUMMARY REPORT**

**ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Department of Planning, Research and Evaluation**

September 1994

**Michael W. Skarr, Chairperson
State Board of Education**

**Joseph A. Spagnolo
State Superintendent of Education**

FOREWORD

This document presents a summary and analysis of the annual evaluation data obtained from school districts participating in the Illinois Prekindergarten At-Risk Program for the 1992-93 school year.

For further information concerning this report, please contact Kalpana Desai, Department of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Illinois State Board of Education at 217/782-0371.

The interpretations and conclusions expressed herein have been prepared by staff and do not necessarily reflect the position or the policy of the Illinois State Board of Education.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Illinois Prekindergarten Program for Children at Risk of Academic Failure was authorized in 1985 through Section 2-3.71 of the School Code. The statute authorized the State Board of Education to implement and administer a grant program to public school districts to conduct preschool education programs for children ages 3 to 5 who are at risk of academic failure.

The following are highlights of the findings from the FY 93 evaluation:

- In FY 93, \$75.5 million was allocated for the prekindergarten at-risk program. This is a 6% increase from the FY 92 allocation of \$71.5 million.
- Statewide, 295 projects received state funds to serve children in 531 districts, a 13% increase compared to 262 projects in FY 92.
- The number of children participating in FY 93 was 36,182: a 22% increase from 29,707 in FY 92, a 48% increase from 24,356 in FY 91, a 94% increase from 18,660 in FY 90, and a 420% increase from 6,953 in FY 87.
- The average cost per child decreased from \$2,370 in FY 92 and \$2,182 in FY 91 to \$2,120 in FY 93. The average state cost per child in FY 87 was \$1,827.
- Statewide, 25% of the children were ranked by their teachers as above average and 53% as average in their kindergarten readiness skills. These percentages have remained about the same since FY 90 but have increased since the program's beginning in FY 87 from 18% and 38%, respectively.
- The sustained effects study indicates a majority of the children, 82% in kindergarten and 73% in fifth grade, are ranked by their teachers as above average or average in performance across different instructional areas through the fifth grade. The retention rate of these children was only 3%.
- The average IGAP scores of third grade children who participated in the Prekindergarten Program were 229 in reading compared to the 245 for the state, 251 in Mathematics compared to state 268 and 17 in writing compared to the 18 for the state.

For the fourth grade, the average scores were 223 in social science and 215 in science compared to the state average of 250.

- The ethnic composition of children receiving prekindergarten services was 47% white, 31% black, 19% Hispanic, 3% Asian and 1% American Indian and other. This ratio has not significantly changed since FY 87.
- In FY 93, 66% of the participating children were eligible for free lunch. This is the same percent as in FY 92 but a decrease from the 76% in FY 87.
- In FY 93, 28% of the children served were from single-parent homes and 2% were living with adults other than their parents, compared to 32% and 4%, respectively in FY 91.
- The percent of teachers holding Early Childhood certificates has increased from 55% in FY 91 and 60% in FY 92 to 66.5% in FY 93.
- On average, children attended 122 days with 12 hours of classroom instruction each week.
- Ninety-four percent of the parents were reported to be involved in their children's prekindergarten experiences. Almost 65% of these parents were involved in three or more parent involvement activities. Eighty-two percent of the children whose parents participated in four or more activities were ranked above average or average in kindergarten readiness skills, compared to 72% whose parents participated in two or fewer activities. This trend has been observed since the beginning of the program.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Executive Summary	v
Introduction	1
Evaluation Design and Limitations	2
Prekindergarten Program in Illinois	3
Success in Elementary Grades Longitudinal Study: Sustained Effects	5
Characteristics of Children Served	20
Financial Summary	26
Program Characteristics	27
Conclusion and Recommendations	31
Appendices	
A. Policy Statement	34
B. The School Code of Illinois	35
C. Data Tables - Figures	36
D. References	38

TABLE OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. The Prekindergarten Program in Illinois.....	3
2. Number of Children Participating in FY 93.....	4
3. The Total Population and the Sample Size for the Longitudinal Study.....	5
4. FY 94 Recommended Placement by Elementary Grades	7
5. IGAP Scores.....	8
6. Percentages of Prekindergarten and Statewide Students by IGAP Scores.....	8
7. Readiness Level by Family Structure	20
8. Readiness Level by Ethnicity	22
9. Lunch Status of Children Served in the Prekindergarten Program	22
10. Percentage of Children Served in the Prekindergarten Program Who Had Other Preschool Experience	24
11. Readiness Level of Children by Their Previous Preschool Experience	24
12. Number and Percent of Prekindergarten Staff by Categories of Certification and Percent of Children Served	28
13. Number of Projects Collaborating with Other Programs by Activities	29
14. Assessment of Prekindergarten Children in Elementary Grades in FY 93	36
15. FY 93 Financial Summary	37

TABLE OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. FY 93 Assessment of Prekindergarten Children in Elementary Grades.....	6
2. IGAP Reading Scores for the Prekindergarten Children Who Were in 3rd Grade.....	10
2a. Percentage of Students Statewide 3rd Grade Reading (IGAP).....	11
2b. Percentage of Prekindergarten Participants 3rd Grade Reading (IGAP).....	11
3. IGAP Mathematics Scores for the Prekindergarten Children Who Were in 3rd Grade.....	12
3a. Percentage of Students Statewide 3rd Grade Mathematics (IGAP).....	13
3b. Percentage of Prekindergarten Participants 3rd Grade Mathematics (IGAP).....	13
4. IGAP Writing Scores for the Prekindergarten Children Who Were in 3rd Grade.....	14
4a. Percentage of Students Statewide 3rd Grade Writing (IGAP).....	15
4b. Percentage of Prekindergarten Participants 3rd Grade Writing (IGAP).....	15
5. IGAP Science Scores for the Prekindergarten Children Who Were in 4th Grade.....	16
5a. Percentage of Students Statewide 4th Grade Science (IGAP).....	17
5b. Percentage of Prekindergarten Participants 4rd Grade Science (IGAP).....	17
6. IGAP Social Science Scores for the Prekindergarten Children Who Were in 4th Grade.....	18

TABLE OF FIGURES continued

Figure	Page
6a. Percentage of Students Statewide 4th Grade Social Science (IGAP)	19
6b. Percentage of Prekindergarten Participants 4th Grade Social Science (IGAP)	19
7. Racial/Ethnic Breakdown	21
8. Lunch Status.....	23
9. Children's Readiness Level by School Lunch Status	23
10. Kindergarten Readiness Level by Program Years	25
11. State Fund Expenditures by Services.....	26
12. Readiness Level by Parent Participation.....	30
13. Number of Projects and Number of Children Served in Each County in FY 93.....	39

INTRODUCTION

On May 9, 1985, the State Board of Education adopted a policy statement on early childhood education. Legislation enacted in 1985 authorized the State Board of Education to administer a new grant program which enabled school districts to operate prekindergarten programs for children aged 3 to 5 years old. The statute (Sec. 2-3.71, of the School Code) identified the eligible population to be served in this program as "children who were at risk of academic failure because of their home and community environment." (See Appendix A for a copy of the Board's policy statement and Appendix B for a copy of the statute.)

According to the Act, "Funds shall be distributed for the benefit of children who, because of their home and community environment, are subject to such language, cultural, economic and like disadvantages that they have been determined, as a result of screening procedures, to be at risk of academic failure."

Research indicates a disproportionate share of at-risk children come from poor families where English is not spoken as the primary language in the home or have parent(s) who either are teenagers or have not yet completed high school. Children at-risk may also include children who were born prematurely or who had a low birth weight; these children may be developmentally delayed neurologically, but are not physically disabled.

The procedures used to identify children who are at risk of academic failure are based on the results from individual screening and assessment and are not determined by an individual's membership in a given group or the characteristics of their family.

EVALUATION DESIGN AND LIMITATIONS

This report is based on information collected from each project at the end of the school year by the following data collection instruments:

- Prekindergarten Program Record - collects information regarding program characteristics;
- Prekindergarten Student Record - collects information regarding the characteristics of students served, their status and performance; and
- Prekindergarten Follow-up Report - collects information to measure performance of children in succeeding school years.

Limitations

This evaluation report describes program and participant characteristics and presents information about a number of program variables linked to participant performance. Inferences about causal relationships are not intended, and assumptions linking program services to participant outcomes should be made with caution.

Factors which limit the ability to generalize the evaluation's results to all projects and participants across the state include the following:

- Individual projects are required to establish their own eligibility criteria and methods for screening based on local needs. No single uniform eligibility standard or screening system is applied to all age-appropriate populations.
- For the longitudinal study, a random sample of at least 20% of the children who have participated in the program were selected from each grade. IGAP data were provided by districts for third and fourth grade students selected in the sample population. IGAP data from Chicago schools were not available. In addition to the IGAP data, the program requires that participants' performance be ranked above average, average, below average or deficient. Final rankings are based on subjective judgments influenced by locally defined performance standards and assessment practices.
- Statewide variations in population characteristics and related needs influence project characteristics. The character of the program's services may differ from project to project as a result of program designs tailored to community needs.

However, the data collected and the subsequent evaluation help identify factors that seem to be related to performance and provide a partial explanation of how students are responding to prekindergarten experiences. The next sections deal with the findings from these data.

PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM IN ILLINOIS

The Illinois General Assembly appropriated \$75.5 million for the Prekindergarten At-Risk Program for Fiscal 1993 resulting in 295 prekindergarten projects being funded. These projects served a total of 531 districts in FY 93, compared to 232 in FY 86 and 496 in FY 92. School districts served 36,182 at-risk children in the regular school year and 4,558 in the summer, from a total of 71,470 children screened. Table 1 profiles program participation for FY 86 through FY 93.

Table 1 The Prekindergarten Program in Illinois

	FY 86	FY 87	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93
Number of Projects	100	94	94	135	184	236	262	295
Number of Participating Districts	232	202	178	279	353	475	496	531
Percentage Change in Districts Each Year	-	(15%)	(13%)	57%	27%	35%	4%	7%
Number of Joint Agreements	NA	15	18	22	27	37	41	46
Number of Children Screened	24,340	26,749	23,993	32,161	45,770	57,482	67,388	71,470
Number of Children Enrolled	5,471	6,953	7,030	10,792	18,660	24,356	29,707	36,182
Percentage Increase in Children Enrolled Each Year	-	29%	1%	54%	73%	31%	22%	22%
Appropriation (in Millions)	\$12.1 ^a	\$12.7	\$12.7	\$23.9	\$48	\$63	\$71.5	\$75.5
Percentage Increase in Appropriation Each Year	-	5%	0%	88%	101%	31%	13%	6%

^aThe FY 86 appropriation was divided between screening (\$3.1 million) and program delivery (\$9.0 million). Funding for 1986 was from January to June.

The 7% increase in funds enabled programs to serve 22% more children (from 29,707 in FY 92 to 36,182 in FY 93).

However, it should be noted here that out of 24,862 children enrolled downstate, 5,805 children dropped out of the program within three months and another 705 dropped out before finishing the program. About 74% of the children participated for a full year with 57% attending the program for more than 75 days.

Table 2 displays the number of children who received services and the number who were eligible but did not receive services in three categories: downstate Chicago and statewide.

Table 2. Number of Children Participating in FY 93

	Downstate	Chicago	Statewide
Children Enrolled	24,862	11,320	36,182
Children Participating in Their Second Year of the Program	4,991	2,402	7,393
Total Number of Children Enrolled during the Summer	1,106	3,452	4,558
Number of Children Who Participated Only in the Summer Program	234	0	234
Eligible after Screening, but Not Enrolled	7,170	3,065	10,235

**SUCCESS IN ELEMENTARY GRADES LONGITUDINAL STUDY:
SUSTAINED EFFECTS**

The Illinois Prekindergarten At-Risk Program is designed to provide early childhood experiences to enhance growth and development of participants to assure a reasonable chance for academic success in school. In FY 93 to determine the success of the program, a random sample of 20% of the children who had participated in the program was selected from each grade. The fourth and fifth grade sample size was larger (see Table 3) because the total number of participants was smaller. The sample for Chicago students was selected separately. The percentage of children selected from the total population is larger than downstate because of the higher mobility rate in Chicago.

Table 3. The Total Population and the Sample Size for the Longitudinal Study

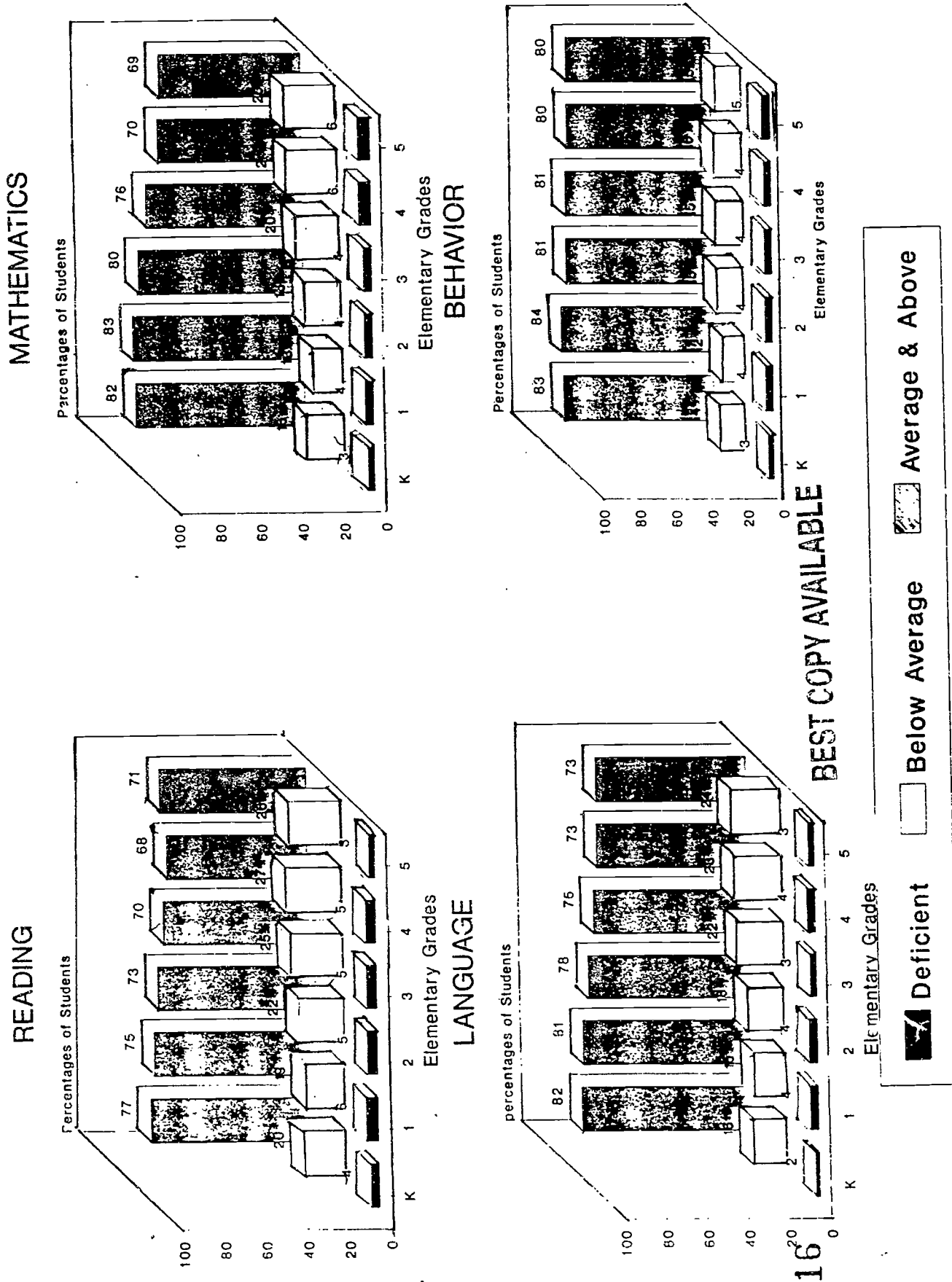
	Downstate		Chicago		Statewide	
	Population	Sample	Population	Sample	Population	Sample
Kindergarten	10,558	2,200	6,412	2,200	16,970	4,400
First Grade	8,022	1,600	5,600	1,600	13,622	3,200
Second Grade	4,923	1,000	3,750	1,000	8,673	2,000
Third Grade	2,637	450	2,400	450	5,037	900
Fourth Grade	1,501	450	1,710	450	3,211	900
Fifth Grade	1,094	450	830	400	1,924	850

The teachers in elementary grades were asked to rank children who participated in the prekindergarten program on their academic performance in reading, mathematics, language and behavior. The four performance categories were above average, average, below average, and deficient.

Statewide, at the end of school year 1992-1993, 73-82% of the students who attended a prekindergarten at-risk program were ranked as above average or average from kindergarten (82%) to fifth grade (73%) in three instructional areas, with reading being weakest (71% - 77%) and mathematics the strongest (79% - 82%). The behavior of about 80% to 83% of the children was judged as above average or average in kindergarten through fourth grade. (See Table 11 in Appendix C.)

The performance of students by grade is also indicated in Figure 1. **The percentage of children in the below average category from kindergarten to fifth grade has been steadily increasing from 20% to 26% in reading and 16% to 25% in mathematics and language, while the percentage of children in the deficient category remains about the same (3 to 5%).**

FIGURE 1
FY 93 ASSESSMENT OF PREKINDERGARTEN
CHILDREN IN ELEMENTARY GRADES



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Promotion rate was another variable used to determine program success. In FY 93, 97% of all children who had participated in the prekindergarten program were promoted to the next grade. As Table 4 reveals, the percentage of children advanced to the next regular grade decreased from kindergarten (83%) to first grade through fourth grade (76-74%) but increased in fifth grade (77%). The percentage of children advanced to the next grade with supplemental services also shows the same trend. The retention rate of these children has decreased from nearly 4% in the first grade to only 1% in the fifth grade.

Table 4. FY 94 Recommended Placement by Elementary Grades

Placement 1992-93	Kindergarten	First Grade	Second Grade	Third Grade	Fourth Grade	Fifth Grade
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Advance to Next Regular Grade	83.0	76.6	75.4	74.9	74.1	76.9
Advance to Next Grade with Supple- mental Services	10.1	13.0	14.1	13.1	14.9	14.2
Advance to Next Grade with Special Education Services	2.4	3.8	5.7	6.5	6.9	5.5
Advance to Transition Class	0.7	--	--	--	--	-
Refer for Special Education Placement	0.5	0.8	1.3	1.4	1.7	1.8
Bilingual Self- contained	1.6	1.9	1.1	1.7	0.7	0.5
Retention	1.7	3.9	2.5	2.4	1.7	1.1
Unknown*	(0.5)	(0.5)	(0.4)	(0.3)	(0.9)	(1.2)

Note: Percentages were calculated without including unknown.

* Percent of total children.

The results of the longitudinal studies in FY 89 and FY 92 reflect similar patterns. Considering the fact that children in the program were identified as potentially at risk of academic failure, a 97% success rate reflects positively on the program's effectiveness.

IGAP SCORES

For the first time in FY 93, schools received the Illinois Goal Assessment Program (IGAP) test scores by individual student. To compare and evaluate the progress of the children who were in the prekindergarten program, the State Board of Education collected the IGAP scores of third and fourth graders who participated in the prekindergarten program. The IGAP data for Chicago students were not available.

As Table 5 reveals, the average IGAP scores of third grade students in reading, mathematics and writing are closer to the state averages, but the social science and science IGAP scores of fourth grade students are lower than state averages. However, Figures 2 through 6 show, the scores are normally distributed, indicating that 67% of the students' scores fall within one standard deviation.

Table 5. IGAP SCORES

Number of Prekindergarten Students		Mean		Standard Deviation *	
		State	Prekindergarten	State	Prekindergarten
Reading	N=352	244.6	228.5	111.9	111.5
Mathematics	N=353	268.4	251.8	103.8	97.1
Writing	N=340	17.7	17.0	3.7	3.7
Science	N=353	250.0	214.9	99.9	87.0
Social Science	N=355	250.0	222.8	100.1	87.3

*Standard deviation is based on calculating how far each individual score in a distribution of scores deviates from the mean.

Table 6 compares the percentage of prekindergarten students with the percentage of students statewide by IGAP scores.

Table 6. Percentages of Prekindergarten and Statewide Students by IGAP Scores

Instruction Area	Below one STD*		Average and Above		Between two STD **	
	State	Prek.	State	Prek.	State	Prek.
Reading (3rd grade)	18.0	21.3	60.4	54.2	69.4	68.9
Mathematics (3rd grade)	18.1	17.5	50.8	44.3	64.6	72.2
Writing (3rd grade)	17.6	24.2	35.4	31.0	62.7	59.7
Social Sc. (4th grade)	17.6	21.1	53.9	38.2	66.2	69.9
Science (4th grade)	18.5	24.3	53.7	33.3	66.5	70.3

* STD - Standard deviation

** Between plus or minus one standard deviation from the mean.

These data also reveal that prekindergarten program students' performance at the end of the third grade is close to that of students statewide. However, in the fourth grade, social science and science scores are lower for participating prekindergarten students than for all students statewide.

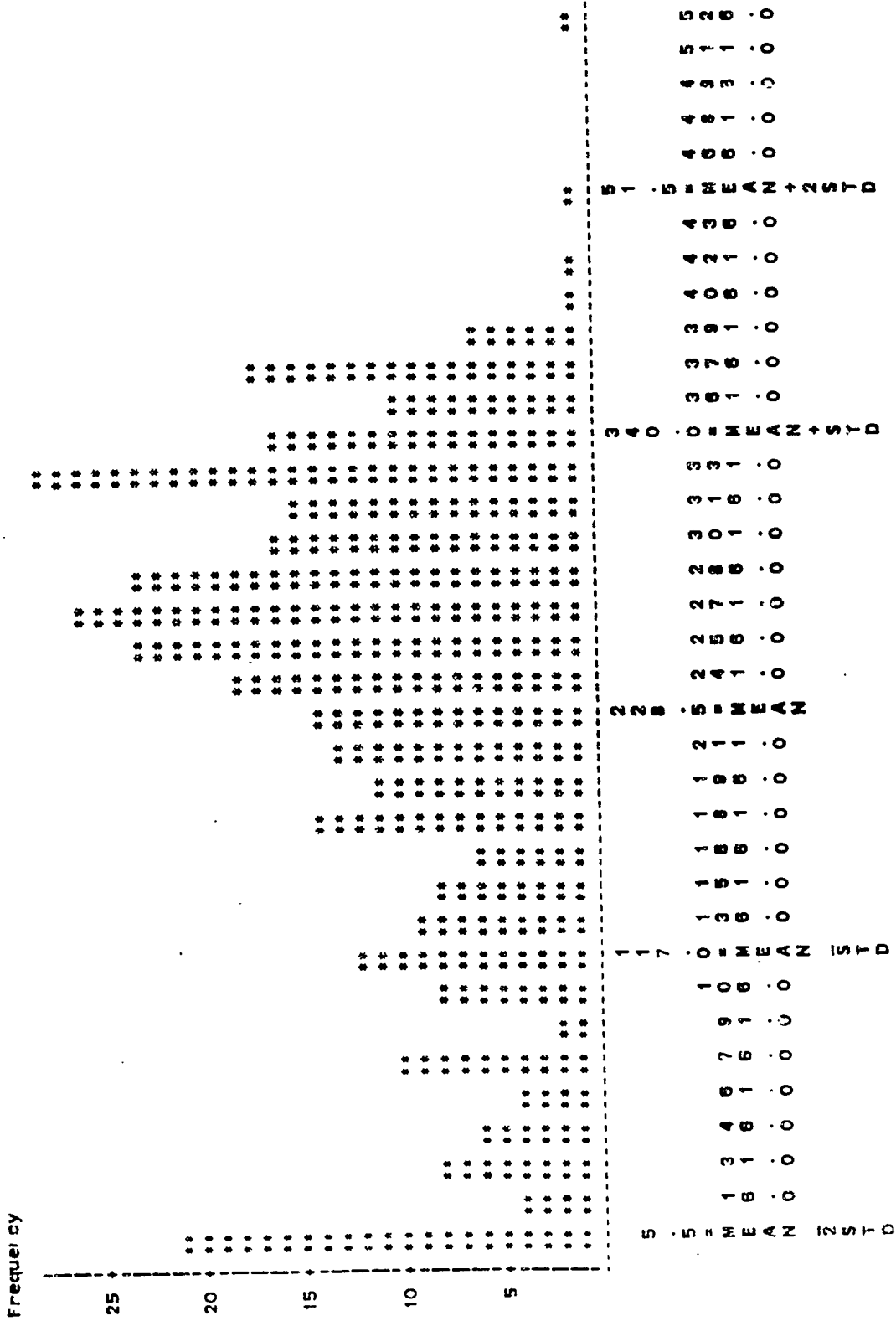
Figures 2 through 6 also reveal that higher percentages of prekindergarten children fall within two standard deviations, with fewer performing above average. Most of the prekindergarten children fall below average but within the first standard deviation.

IGAP Score and Ranking System

A correlational analysis procedure between students' ranking of reading, mathematics or writing and their IGAP scores showed a positive significant relationship, e.g., a student who is ranked above average in mathematics also had an above average mathematics IGAP score based on the state norm.

(r reading = .5797, p = .01) (r mathematics = .5054, p = .01) (r writing = .2589, p = .01)
(r = correlation. p = significant level.) The significant correlations between teachers' ranking of student performance and the IGAP results establishes credibility for the ranking system of the longitudinal study.

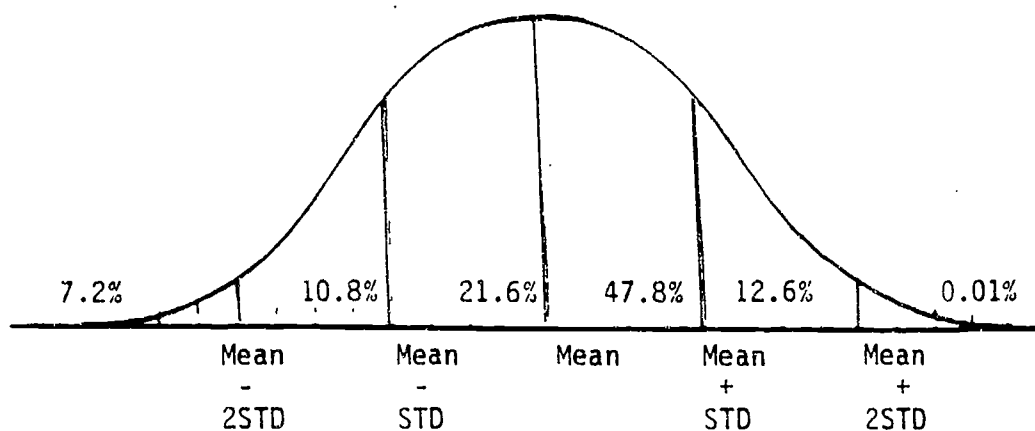
FIGURE 2: IGAP READING SCORES FOR THE PREKINDERGARTEN CHILDREN WHO WERE IN 3RD GRADE



244.6=STATE MEAN
132.7=STATE MEAN STD
356.5=STATE MEAN STD
20.8=STATE MEAN 2STD
488.4=STATE MEAN 2STD

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FIGURE 2A : PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS STATEWIDE 3RD GRADE READING (IGAP)



State Mean	=	244.6
State Mean-STD	=	132.7
State Mean+STD	=	356.5
State Mean-2STD	=	20.8
State Mean+2STD	=	468.4

FIGURE 2B: PERCENTAGE OF PREKINDERGARTEN PARTICIPANTS 3RD GRADE READING (IGAP)

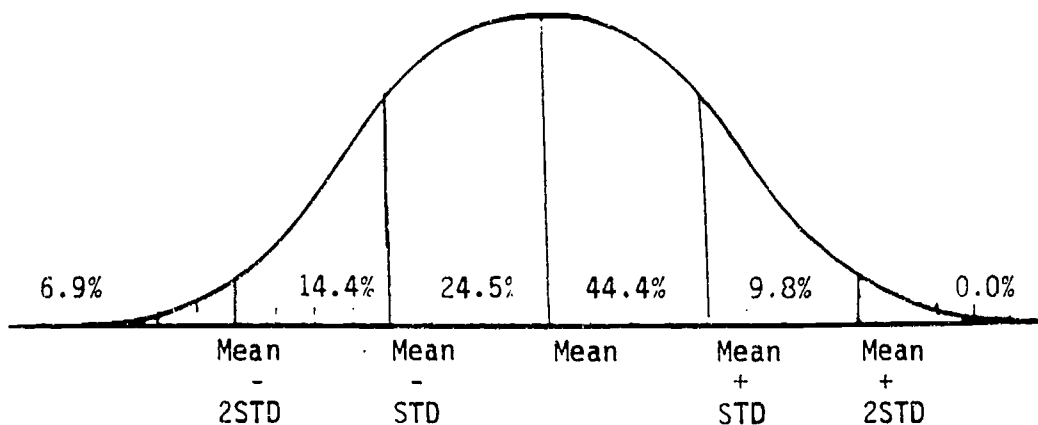
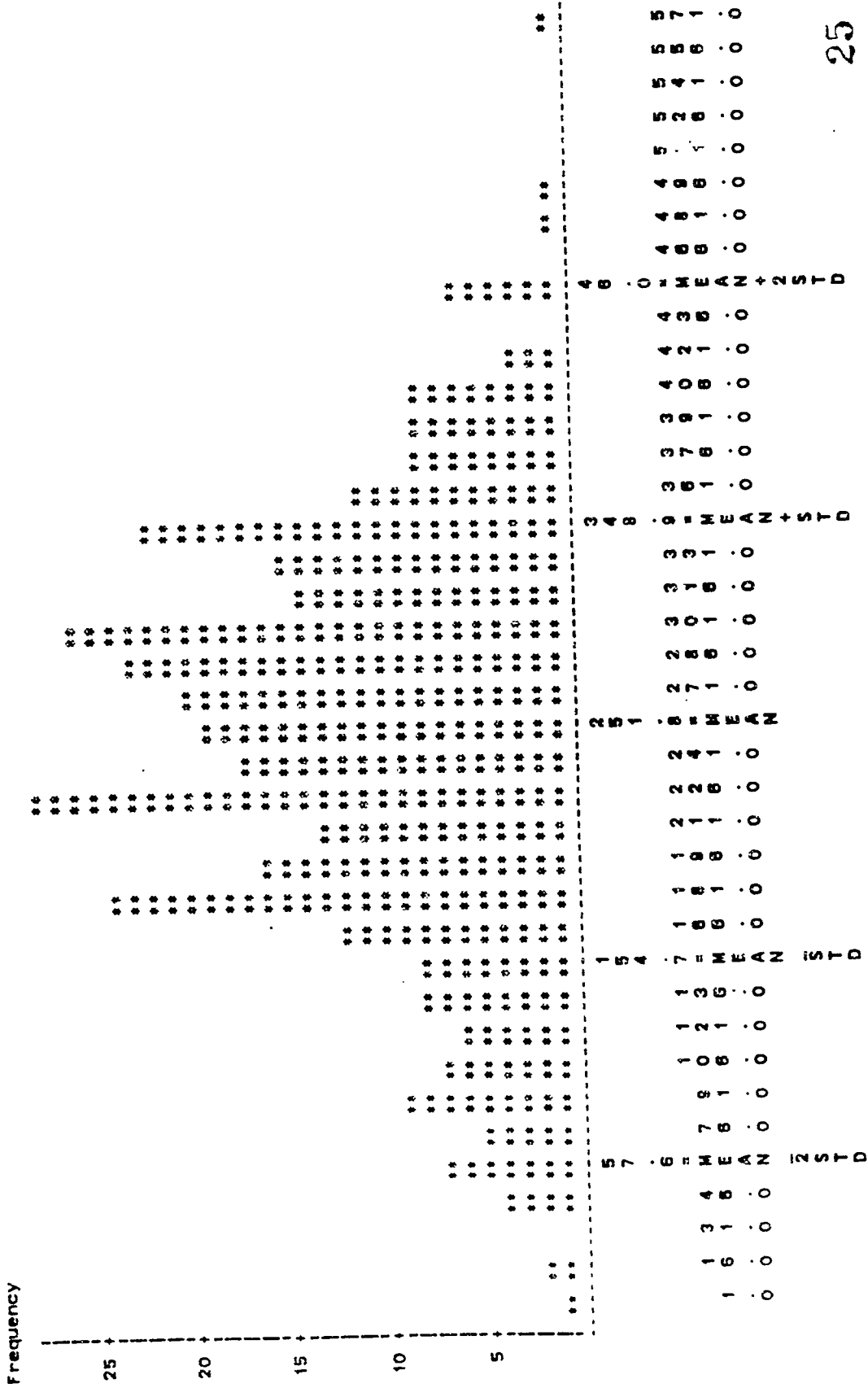


FIGURE 3: IGAP MATHEMATICS SCORES
FOR THE PREKINDERGARTEN CHILDREN WHO WERE IN 3RD GRADE

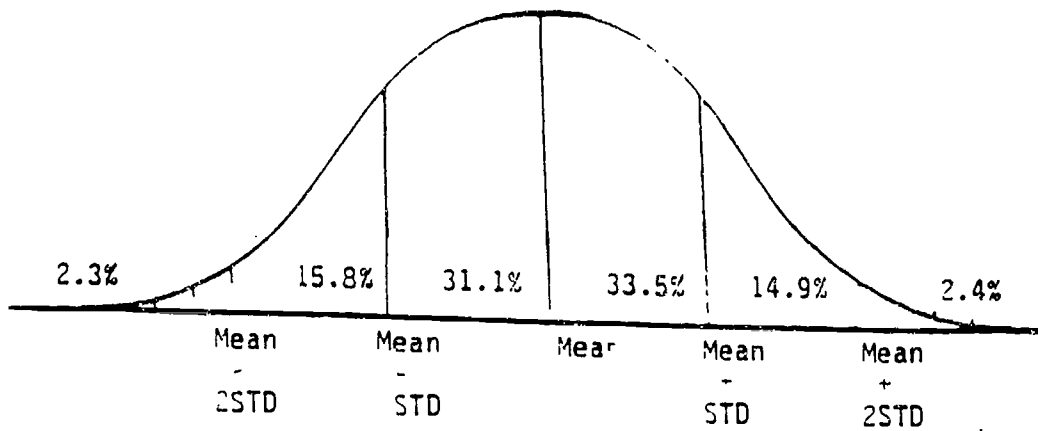


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288.4=STATE MEAN
184.8=STATE MEAN-STD
372.2=STATE MEAN+STD
60.8=STATE MEAN-2STD
476.0=STATE MEAN+2STD

MEAN Midpoint

FIGURE 3A: PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS STATEWIDE 3RD GRADE MATHEMATICS (IGAP)



State Mean = 268.4
 State Mean-STD = 164.6
 State Mean+STD = 372.2
 State Mean-2STD = 60.8
 State Mean+2STD = 476.0

FIGURE 3B: PERCENTAGE OF PREKINDERGARTEN PARTICIPANTS 3RD GRADE MATHEMATICS (IGAP)

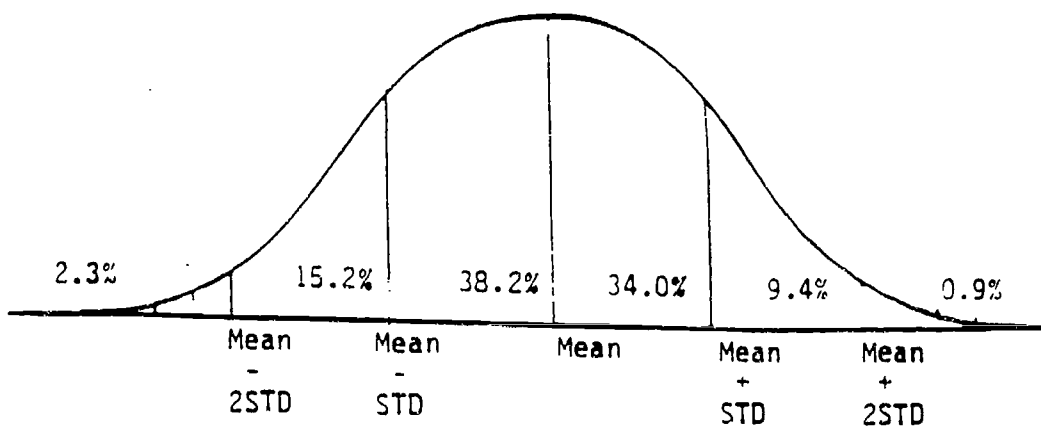


FIGURE 4: IQAP WRITING SCORES FOR THE PREKINDERGARTEN CHILDREN WHO WERE IN 3RD GRADE

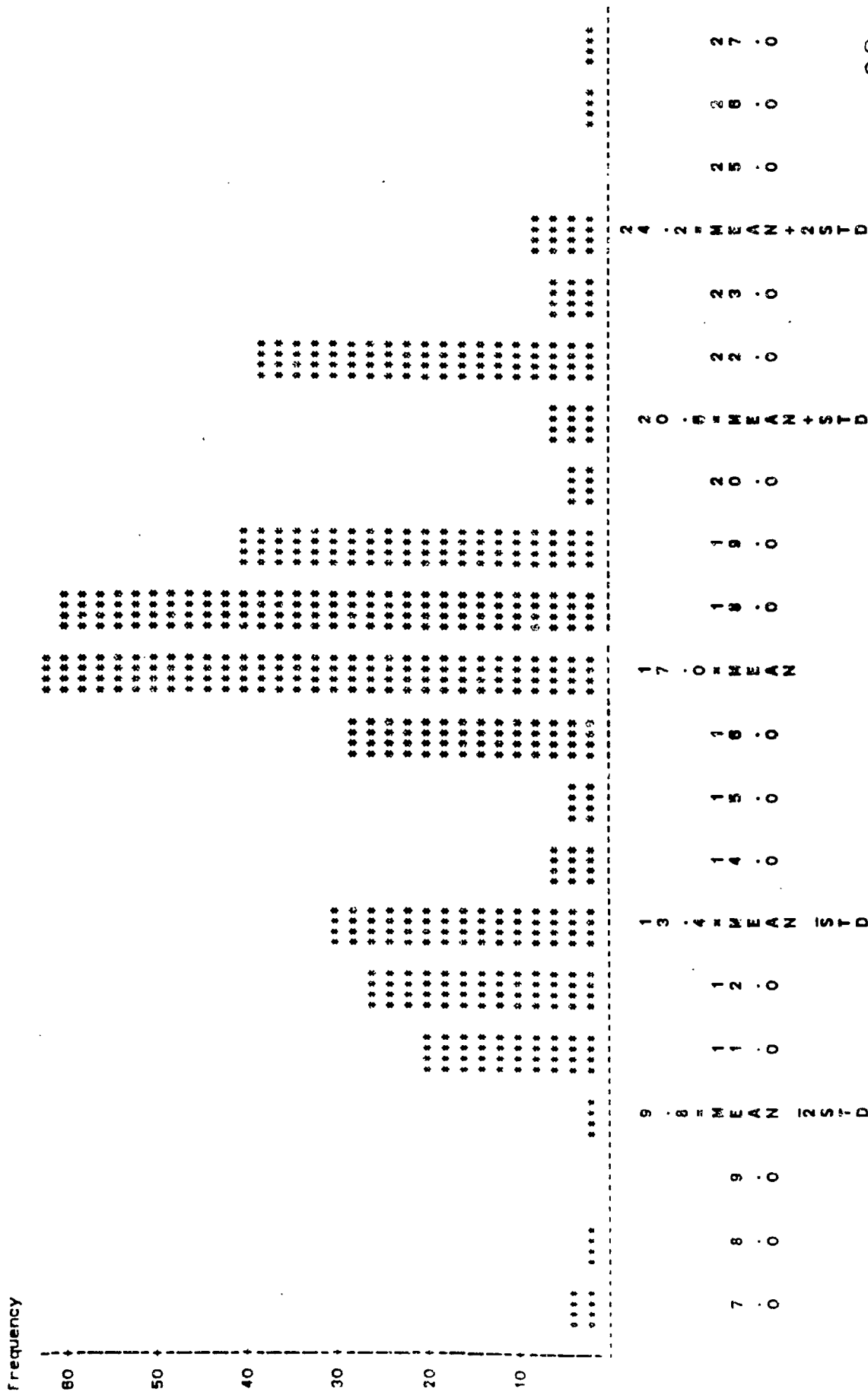
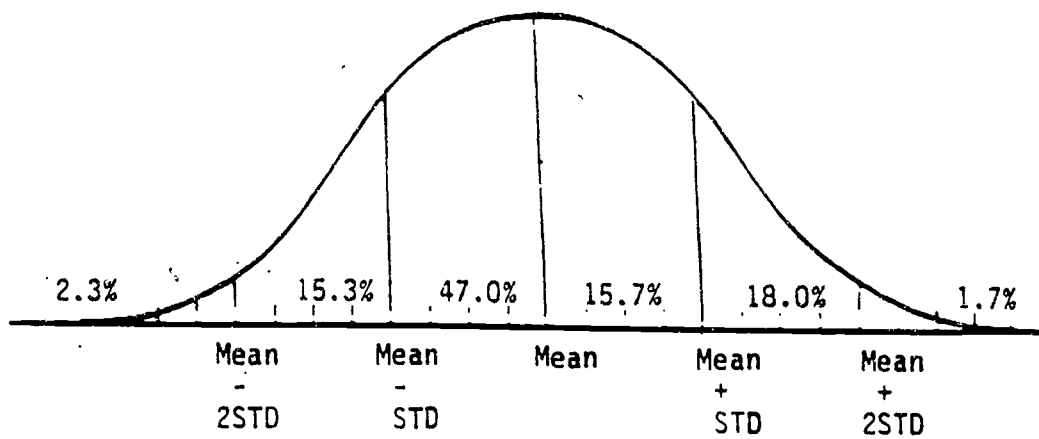


FIGURE 4A: PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS STATEWIDE 3RD GRADE - WRITING (IGAP)



State Mean	=	17.7
State Mean+STD	=	21.4
State Mean-STD	=	14.0
State Mean+2STD	=	25.1
State Mean-2STD	=	10.3

FIGURE 4B: PERCENTAGE OF PREKINDERGARTEN PARTICIPANTS 3RD GRADE - WRITING (IGAP)

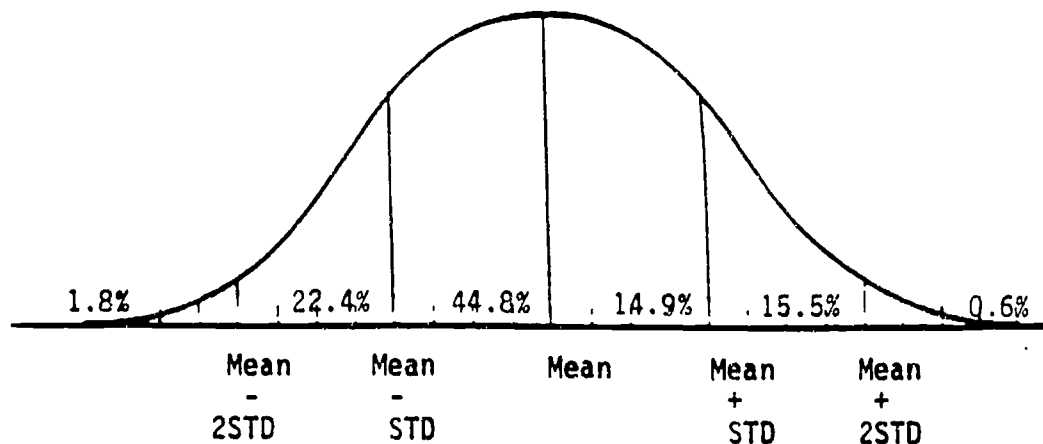
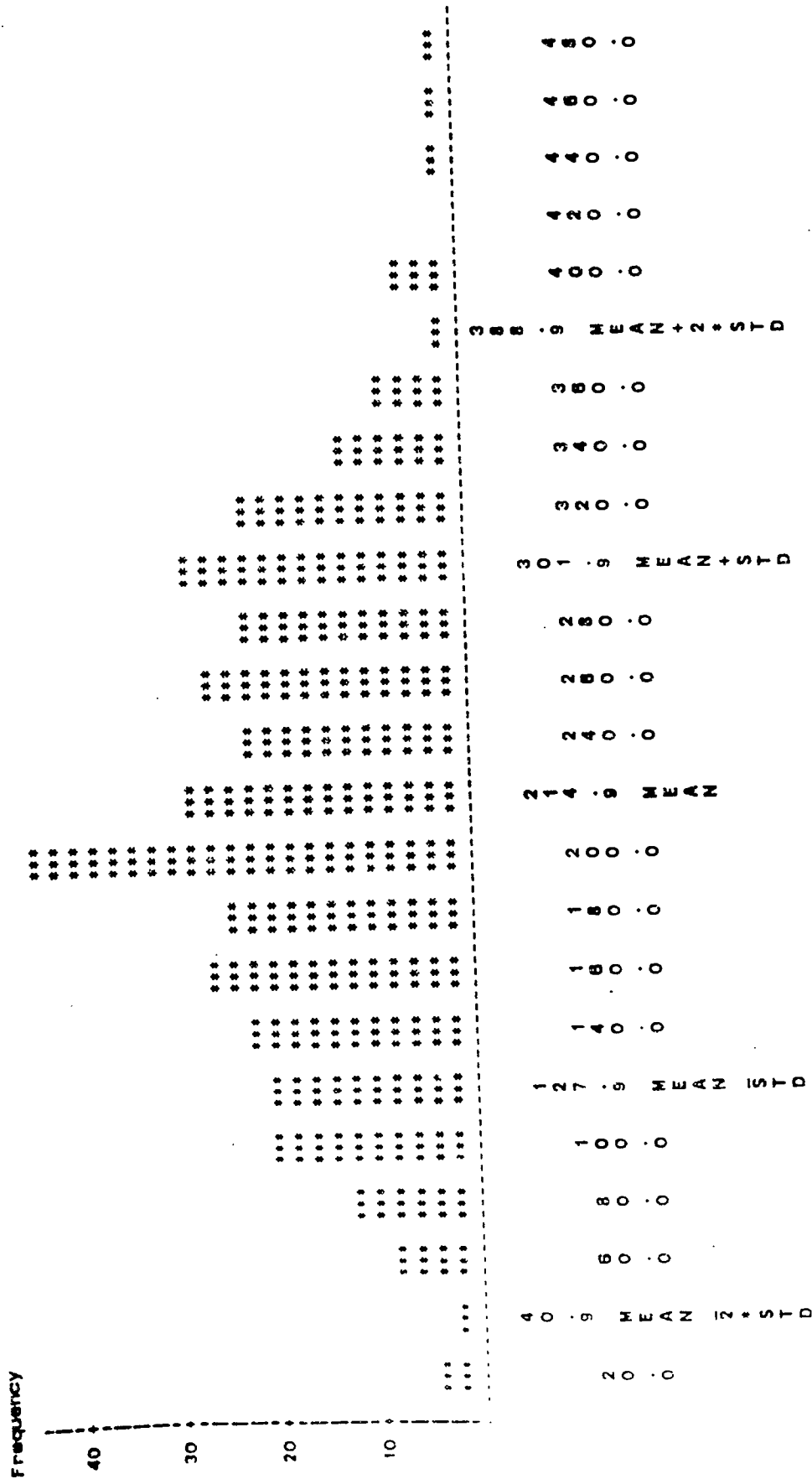


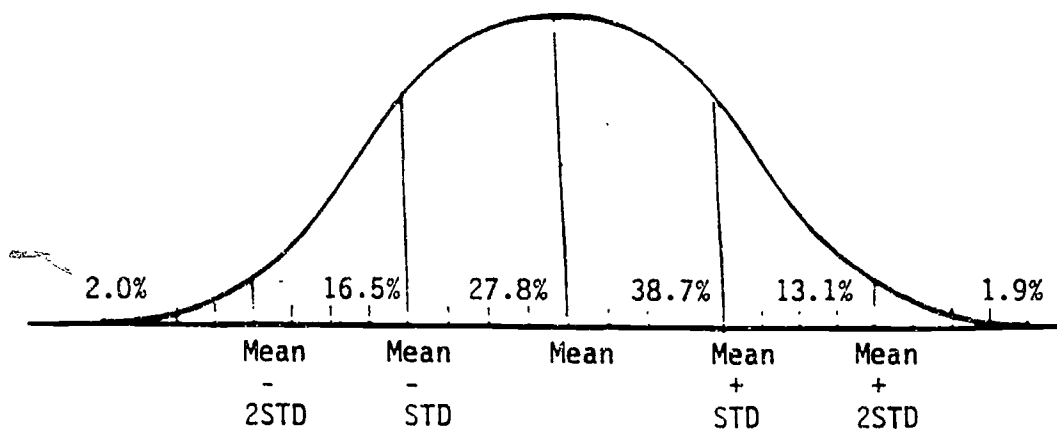
FIGURE 5: IQAP SCIENCE SCORES FOR THE PREKINDERGARTEN CHILDREN WHO WERE IN 4TH GRADE



STATE MEAN=250
 STATE MEAN STD=150
 STATE MEAN+STD=350
 STATE MEAN 2STD=50
 STATE MEAN+2STD=450



FIGURE 5A : PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS STATEWIDE 4TH GRADE — SCIENCE (IGAP)



State Mean = 250
 State Mean+STD = 350
 State Mean-STD = 150
 State Mean+2STD = 450
 State Mean-2STD = 50

FIGURE 5B : PERCENTAGE OF PREKINDERGARTEN PARTICIPANTS 4th GRADE — SCIENCE (IGAP)

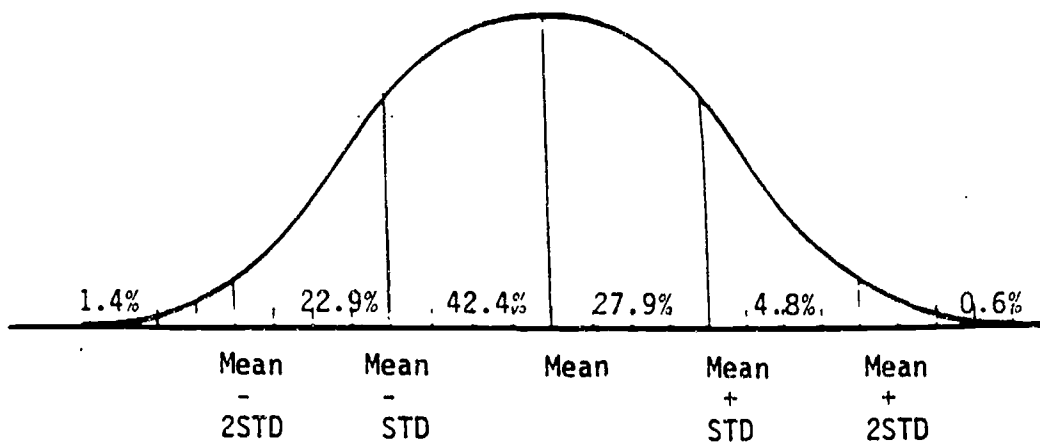
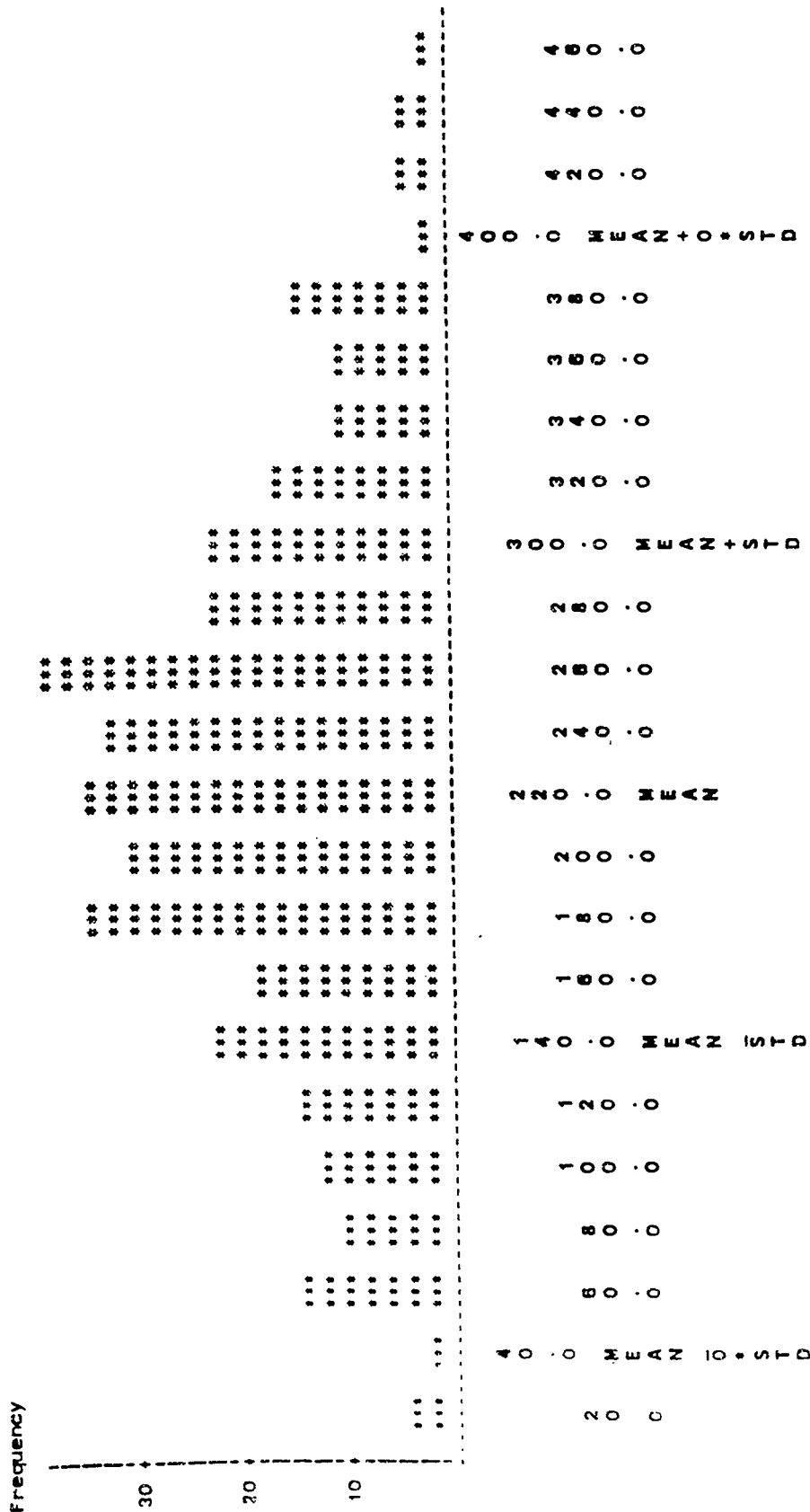


FIGURE 6: IQAP SOCIAL SCIENCE SCORES FOR THE PREKINDERGARTEN CHILDREN WHO WERE IN 4TH GRADE

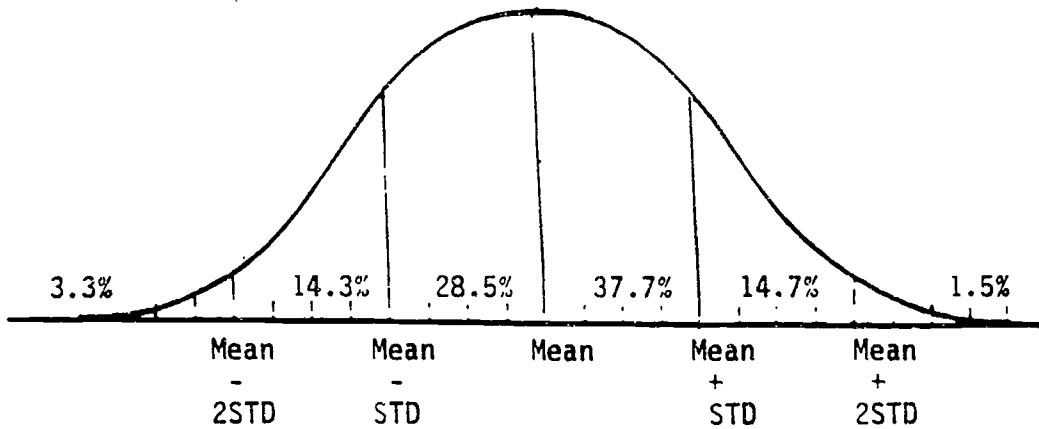


ISOSC Midpoint

STATE MEAN=250
 STATE MEAN_STD=150
 STATE MEAN+STD=350
 STATE MEAN_2STD=450

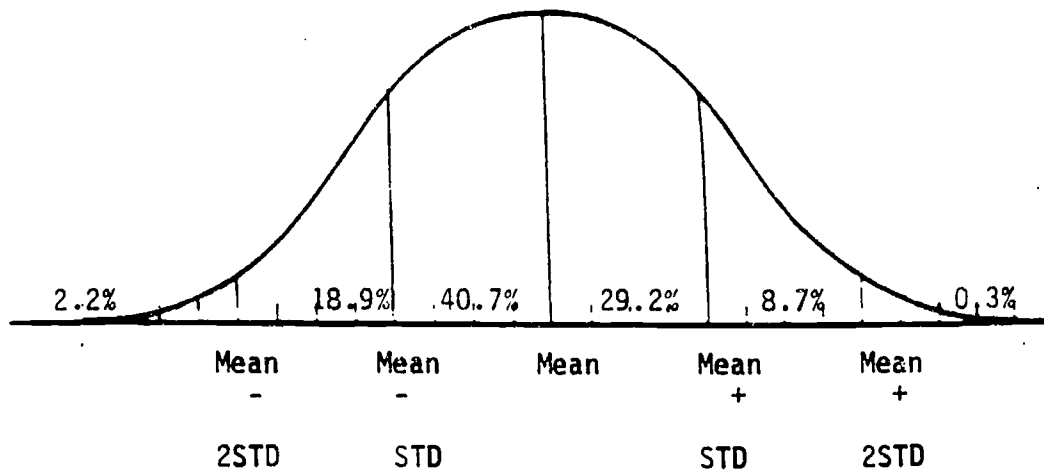
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FIGURE 6A : PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS STATEWIDE 4TH GRADE ~ SOCIAL SCIENCE (IGAP)



State Mean	=	250
State Mean+STD	=	350
State Mean-STD	=	150
State Mean+2STD	=	450
State Mean-2STD	=	50

FIGURE 6B : PERCENTAGE OF PREKINDERGARTEN PARTICIPANTS 4TH GRADE ~ SOCIAL SCIENCE (IGAP)



CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN SERVED

Research has shown that environmental background plays a major role in academic success or failure. To evaluate the characteristics of the children served, projects are asked to report information on each child's ethnicity, family structure, health, primary language, free-lunch status and any previous preschool experiences. At the end of the prekindergarten program, teachers are asked to rank each child's readiness for kindergarten according to a four-category scale: above average, average, below average and deficient. These rankings are based on teacher judgment influenced by local assessment practices. In aggregate, some factors appear to be associated with participant success.

Family Structure

Statewide, about two-thirds (62%) of the children served came from homes where both parents are present (excluding 16% whose family structure was unknown). In Chicago, where family structure was known (44% unknown), almost half (49%) of the children served came from single-parent families compared to 28% for regions outside Chicago. This ratio has remained the same from FY 86 through FY 93.

Data indicate that overall, children from homes with both parents present were ranked higher than children from other family structures. Almost 79% were ranked as above average or average compared to 76% of the children from single-parent families and 67% of the children who lived with an adult other than a parent (see Table 7).

Table 7. Readiness Level by Family Structure

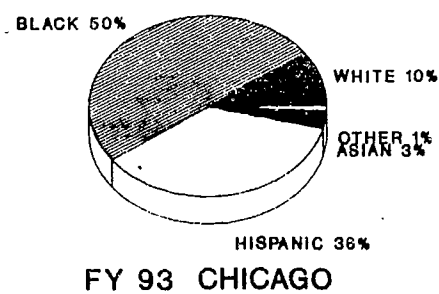
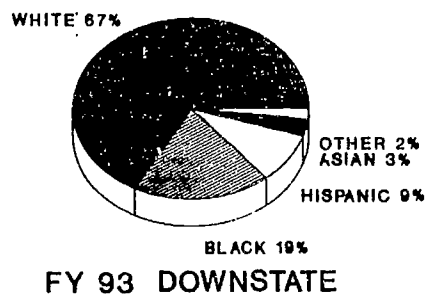
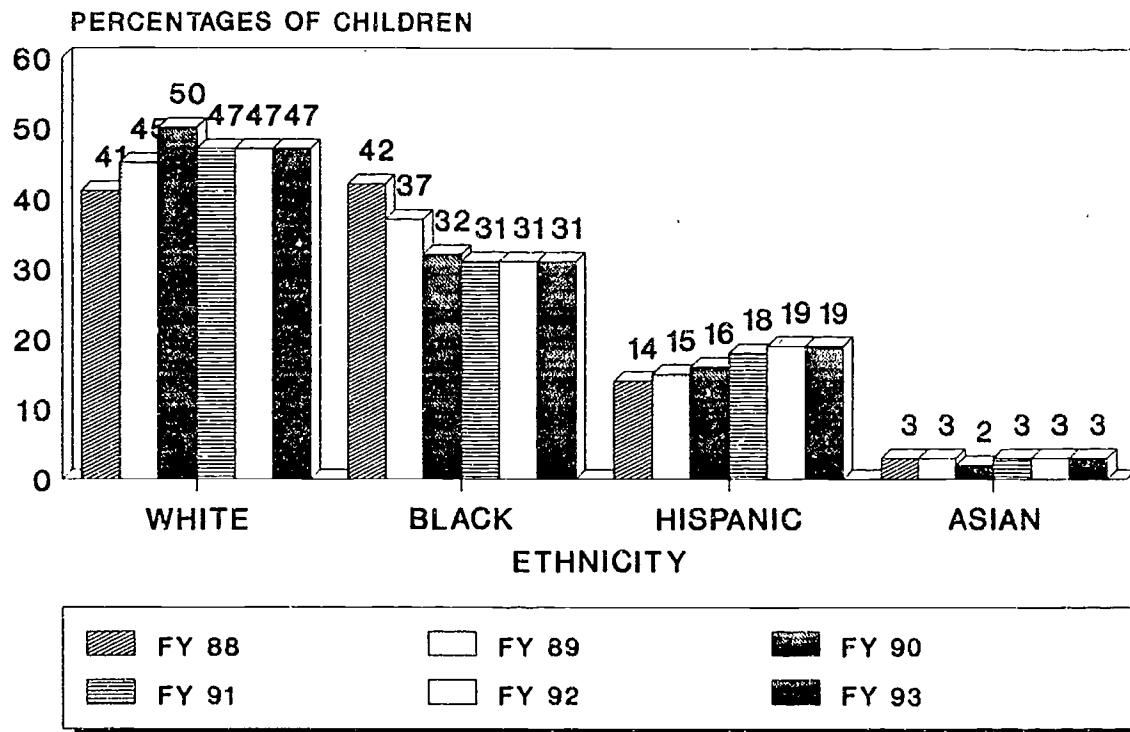
Readiness Level	Both Parents	Single Parent	Adult Other Than Parent	Other
Above Average	23.6%	23.6%	16.3%	15.6%
Average	55.4%	52.9%	50.9%	56.6%
Below Average	16.1%	17.3%	22.5%	17.1%
Deficient	4.9%	6.2%	10.3%	10.6%
Total Number of Children	10,110	5,178	387	339

Racial/Ethnic Breakdown

In FY 93, more than half the children served (54%) were from a minority group. About 47% of the children were white; 31%, black; 19%, Hispanic; and 3%, Asian. "Other," including American Indians, accounted for less than one percent. These percentages were the same in FY 92. Statewide, the program's ethnic and racial configuration has changed very little since FY 87 (Figure 7). There have been slight fluctuations in the percent of black and white children who have been served, 30-40% black and 40-50% white, and each year the percent of Hispanic children has gradually increased (13% in FY 87 to 19% in FY 92 and remained the same in FY 93).

There is a great deal of difference in the make-up of ethnic and racial percentages of children served in Chicago compared with the rest of the state (Figure 7). Most of the children served in Chicago are black (50%) and Hispanic (36%), while the downstate program served 19% black and 9% Hispanic. The ethnic distribution of children served in the downstate projects has remained the same over the years, while in Chicago the percentage of Hispanic children increased (22% in FY 87 to 36% in FY 93) and the percentage of black children decreased (70% to 50%).

**FIGURE 7
RACIAL/ETHNIC BREAKDOWN**



The statewide performance ranking of children by different racial/ethnic backgrounds is shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Readiness Level by Ethnicity

Readiness Level	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	American Indian	Other
Above Average	21.5%	26.6%	28.1%	32.1%	29.3%	21.3%
Average	58.0%	48.3%	50.2%	48.5%	61.0%	57.9%
Below Average	15.5%	18.6%	16.8%	16.5%	7.3%	15.3%
Deficient	5.0%	6.5%	4.9%	2.9%	2.4%	5.5%
Total Number of Children	8,763	5,603	4,076	583	41	183

Family Income Level

The program served a substantial number (75%) of children eligible for free and/or reduced-price lunch. The criteria for determining eligibility is based on family income. Since most programs operate only half days and do not offer meals, 30% of downstate and 1% of Chicago childrens' lunch status was unknown in FY 93. Statewide, for children whose lunch status was known, about 66% of the children served were eligible for free lunch and another 9% were eligible for reduced-price lunch. These figures are about the same since FY 90. In FY 89 and before, 75% of the children were eligible for free lunch with about 8-9% eligible for reduced-price lunch. (See Figure 8.) As Table 9 reveals, about 85% of the children served in Chicago were eligible for free lunch, compared to 51% downstate.

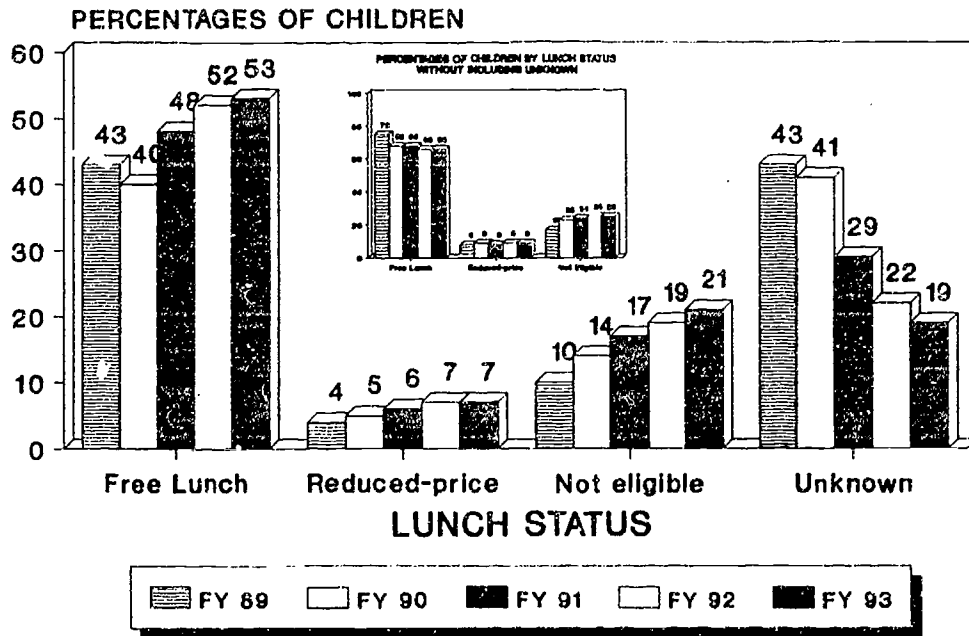
Table 9. Lunch Status of Children Served in the Prekindergarten Program

Lunch Status	Downstate				Chicago			
	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Free Lunch	26 (56)	48 (68)	34 (51)	36 (51)	73 (81)	80 (82)	82 (84)	84 (85)
Reduced-Price	4 (10)	6 (8)	7 (11)	7 (10)	7 (8)	7 (7)	7 (7)	6 (7)
Not Eligible	15 (34)	17 (24)	26 (38)	27 (39)	11 (11)	10 (11)	9 (9)	9 (8)
Unknown	55 -	29 -	33 -	30 -	10 -	3 -	3 -	1
Total	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)				

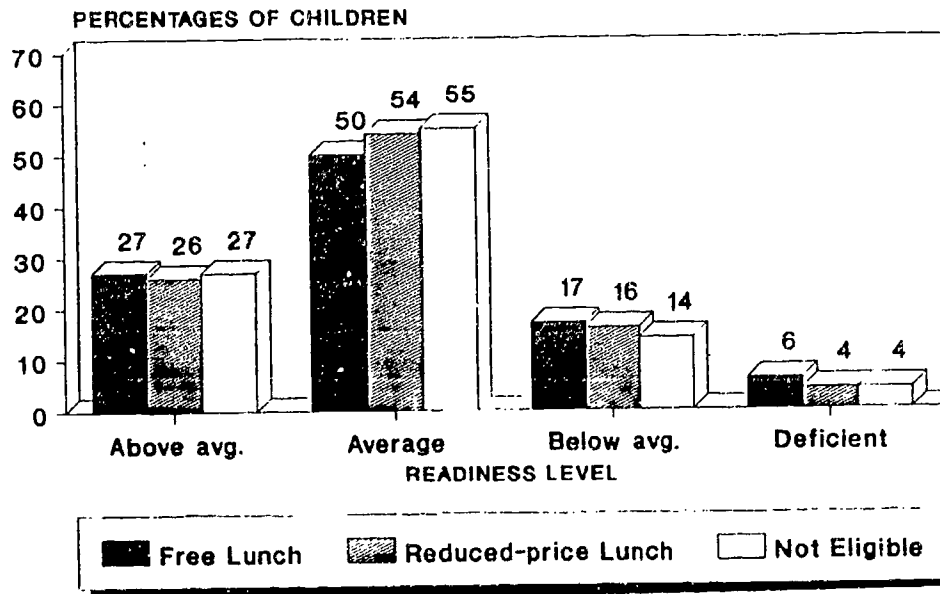
Percentages in parentheses are calculated without including the unknown.

Family income seems to have some effect on performance rankings. As Figure 9 reveals, 77% of the children who were eligible for free lunch performed at above average or average levels in kindergarten readiness skills, compared to 82% of the children who were not eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. This difference in performance is comparable statewide, with both Chicago and downstate areas showing similar patterns.

**FIGURE 8
LUNCH STATUS**



**FIGURE 9
CHILDREN'S READINESS LEVEL
BY SCHOOL LUNCH STATUS**



Previous Program Experience

About half (54%) of the children identified as at-risk and enrolled in the program had no previous preschool experience. Table 10 identifies the percentage of children in the program who have had previous preschool experience. These percentages over time have remained about the same with the greatest change occurring in the other preschool category. The number of children with two years of participation increased from 21% to 24% in FY 93.

Table 10. Percentage of Children Served in the Prekindergarten Program Who Had Other Preschool Experience

Previous Preschool Experience	% of Children				
	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93
None	63.0	62.2	65.1	62.8	54.2
Private Sector	6.6	6.5	6.5	6.4	6.3
Prevention Initiative	-	-	-	0.6	0.7
Chapter 1	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.04	0.1
Early Intervention	-	-	-	0.3	0.4
Special Education	1.2	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.8
Head Start	3.1	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.4
Other State Programs	1.0	1.0	1.7	0.7	0.9
Other Preschool	2.2	1.9	2.2	3.0	5.8
2nd Year of PreK "At-Risk"	16.5	16.1	21.2	23.5	23.9
Unknown	6.2	9.0	15.8	17.5	21.6
Total Number of Children	10,455	17,176	23,372	27,269	29,814

Note: The percentages do not total 100% because some children attended more than one program and were counted twice.

Children who had previous preschool experience were ranked slightly higher in their readiness levels than children who did not. Table 11 reveals that 29% of the children who participated for two years in the prekindergarten at-risk program were assessed as above average, compared to 22% with other preschool program experience and 19% with no previous experience.

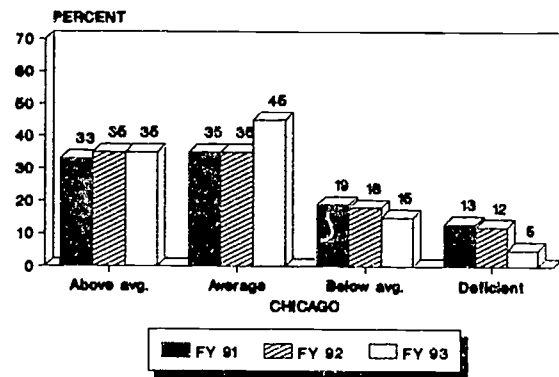
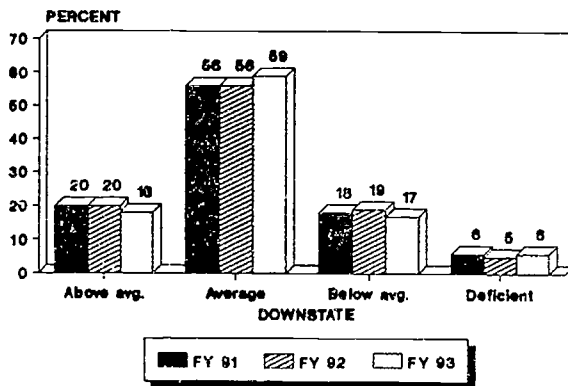
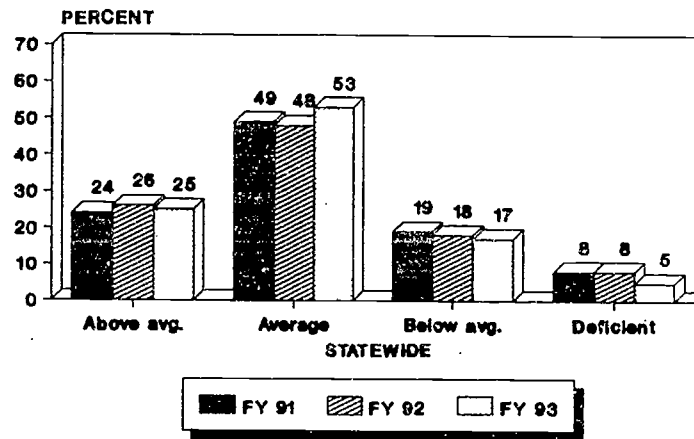
Table 11. Readiness Level of Children by Their Previous Preschool Experience

Readiness Level	No Experience	Other Program Experience	Two Years of Participation in the Prekindergarten Program
Above Average	19.5%	22.1%	28.9%
Average	55.6%	54.9%	51.5%
Below Average	18.4%	16.3%	14.9%
Deficient	6.5%	6.7%	4.7%

The Overall Success of Prekindergarten Children

One measure of success for the program is determined by ranking the level of kindergarten readiness of all participating children at the end of the prekindergarten program. In FY 93, about 78% were ranked as above average or average. From the program's beginning, these percentages have increased slightly every year. In FY 88 and FY 89, 66% of the children were ranked as above average or average compared to 69% in FY 90 and 74% in FY 92. (See Figure 10.) Figure 10 also displays separately the performance of children from Chicago and downstate. It should be noted that this difference could be the result of different assessment instruments and performance criteria.

**FIGURE 10
KINDERGARTEN READINESS LEVEL
BY PROGRAM YEARS**



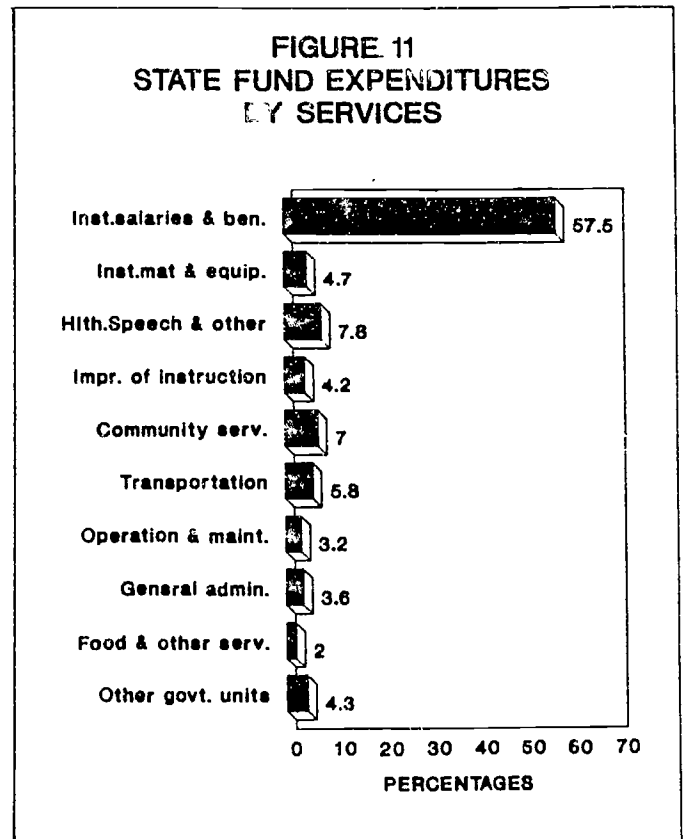
FINANCIAL SUMMARY

In FY 93, the state appropriated \$75.5 million for the program, almost five times (495% increase) the \$12.7 million appropriation in FY 87. In FY 93, separate data were collected at the local district level on direct and in-kind contributions. Besides the \$76,146,296 total expenditure from the state prekindergarten fund, districts reported that a total of \$1,766,519 was contributed directly to the program from local school district budgets and another \$263,204 from other state and private resources. The FY 93 total direct expenditure was \$78,176,018. Districts also estimated that \$3,874,849 was received in in-kind contributions, making the amount of \$82,050,867 available to the program by either direct or indirect contributions.

In FY 93, almost 58% of the expenditures paid for instructional salaries and benefits, compared to 56% in FY 92, 52% in FY 91, 54% in FY 90, 56% in FY 89 and 61% in FY 88. Figure 11 displays the percentages of state fund expenditures by services. Other major expenditures were 7.8% for guidance, speech and audio and health services, 7% for community services, 5.8% for transportation and 4.7% for instructional material and equipment.

These percentages are calculated from state funds only and are about the same as reported in FY 88 and FY 89. (See Table 15 in Appendix C for detailed expenditure breakdown by each service.)

In FY 93, about 38 projects served 4,558 children during the summer. The average cost per child, calculated by prorating the summer enrollment for the FY 93 school year, was \$2,020, a decrease from \$2,243 in FY 92, \$2,182 in FY 91 and \$2,124 in FY 90. The average state cost per child for the program was \$2,209 in FY 89 and \$1,800 in FY 88.



PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

The unique characteristic of the Illinois program is its recognition of the potential for different needs from different demographic areas. The program allows districts to develop their own individual and unique at-risk programs and continue to operate within the State Board of Education's guidelines (see Appendix A). The Illinois State Board of Education collects information from each project to answer the following questions:

- What kinds of instructional settings (classroom, home-based, hours per week, locations, etc.) characterize the Illinois prekindergarten program?
- What types of certification do prekindergarten teachers hold?
- What is the teacher-child ratio?
- What other agencies are involved in the program? What services do these agencies provide?
- What level of parent involvement is found in local programs?

Eligibility Criteria

Projects are required to establish the criteria by which students will be determined to be at risk of academic failure and develop procedures that address fine and gross motor skills, cognitive development, visual motor integration, language and speech development, vocabulary, English proficiency and social competence.

In FY 93, almost one-third of the projects (40%) used the DIAL (Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning) test as their primary screening tool. About 16% of the projects used Chicago EARLY as their screening instrument. Comprehensive Identification Process and the Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Early Development were used by 7% and 10% of the projects respectively. Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test Revised (PPVT-R) was the major secondary screening tool used by almost 21% of the projects.

Instructional Settings

A project can offer different instructional settings depending upon available resources and needs of children. In FY 93, the 295 projects offered 376 different types of program services. About 83% of the projects serving 94% of the children were classroom-based. About 4% of the children were served through a combination of classroom and home-based instruction, and 2.3% of the children were served in only home-based settings. The remaining were served by "other types" of instruction. "Other types" of instruction include receiving services while attending a day care program or being served by prekindergarten staff at another site in the community (usually less than 2 hours a week). These percentages have remained about the same over the last three years.

Eighty-three percent of children receiving services in only classroom settings attended projects offering instruction 9 to 14 hours a week. Statewide, only 4.4% of the children were served in a full-day classroom environment. In Chicago, 6.6% of the children were served in a full-day classroom-based setting.

Characteristics of Educational Staff

The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers was 971.7 in FY 93. The percent of teachers holding Early Childhood Education (ECE) Certificates has been increasing from 55% in FY 91 to 60% in FY 92 to 66% in FY 93, and the percentage of teachers holding an elementary certificate with experience in kindergarten or preschool decreased from 34% to 29%. The percent of teachers having Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) qualifications decreased only by 1% (see Table 12).

Table 12 indicates the percentages of children served by categories of teacher certification. While the total number of children served increased (22%), the percentage of children served by teachers with ECE certification increased from 62% in FY 92 to 69% in FY 93.

Table 12. Number and Percent of Prekindergarten Staff by Categories of Certification and Percent of Children Served

Certification	FTE Teachers				Students Served			
	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
ECE Certified	57.8	54.8	60.1	66.5	61.9	57.6	62.4	68.8
Elementary Certificate with Experience	32.3	37.3	34.5	29.5	30.3	37.4	27.8	26.0
Baccalaureate Degree in Child Development	2.8	3.8	1.7	1.0	1.9	1.8	6.6	2.6
DCFS Qualified	7.1	4.1	3.7	3.0	5.9	3.2	3.3	2.6
Total FTE Teachers	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Teacher-Child Ratio

The teacher-child ratio in the largest class was 1 to 14, and the teacher's aide-child ratio was 1 to 15. The adult-child ratio (teacher and teacher's aide) in the largest class was 1 to 7, the same since FY 91. The adult-child ratio required by rules and regulations of the Illinois prekindergarten program is one adult to 10 children with no more than 20 children in each classroom.

Collaboration with Other Programs and Agencies

The Illinois State Board of Education encourages school districts to establish collaborative agreements with other state agencies and state programs to avoid service duplication and to maximize the use of available resources.

Almost all instructional programs (283 out of 295) had some kind of collaborative involvement with other agencies and programs. Most programs (241) have developed collaborative arrangements with special education for screening and 193 programs for other special education resources. Collaboration activities with adult education agencies were most often used for parent education (153 programs) and resources (127 programs). Head Start was another program frequently cited for collaborative involvement in an effort to coordinate resources, screening and other activities. There were also collaborative arrangements with universities, the Department of Children and Family Services, Public Health, other health agencies and other nonprofit organizations. Percentage comparison of FY 92 and FY 93 data reveals that there has not been a significant change of collaboration practices. Table 13 identifies the number of programs involved in collaborative activities with different prekindergarten projects.

Table 13. Number of Projects Collaborating with Other Programs by Activities

Programs	Inservice	Parent			
		Education	Resources	Screening	Other
0 through 2 Program	39	49	94	84	74
Head Start	63	63	126	102	92
Special Education	119	111	193	241	91
Chapter 1	34	61	89	33	35
Child Care Centers	54	48	102	86	69
Adult Education/Literacy	53	153	127	32	55
Other	45	61	78	28	40

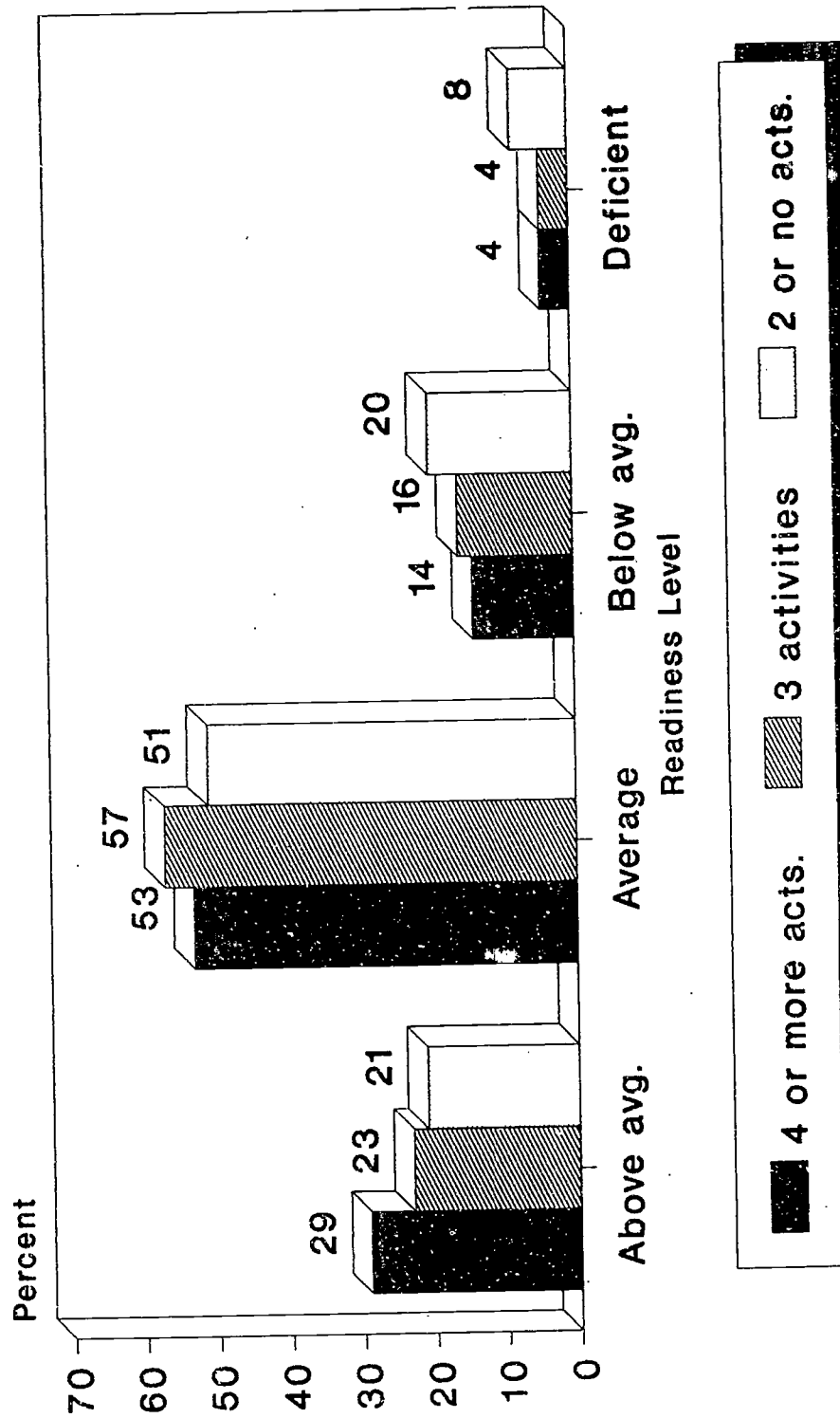
Parent Participation and Involvement

Substantial evidence suggests that parents' involvement in their children's education has a major influence on achievement throughout their school years. The Illinois State Board of Education emphasizes that all prekindergarten programs should include parent participation and parent education components as integral parts of the projects.

The districts efforts resulted in almost 65% of the parents participating in three or more parent involvement activities. About 6% of the parents did not participate in any activities.

Figure 12 reveals that almost 82% of the children whose parents participated in four or more parent involvement activities were ranked above average or average in skills related to kindergarten readiness. Seventy-nine percent of the children whose parents participated in only three activities were ranked above average or average, and 72% of the children whose parents participated in two or no parent involvement activities were ranked above average or average.

**FIGURE 12
 READINESS LEVEL
 BY PARENT PARTICIPATION**



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Illinois Prekindergarten At-Risk Program has experienced significant growth since its initial implementation during 1987. The number of participating projects has increased 214%, and there has been a 561% increase in student participation. The state's commitment to the Prekindergarten Program has continued with a 524% increase in funding from FY 87, while over the same period the cost per child for service provision has not increased.

Program expansion has resulted in services being provided to a broader base of children considered at-risk, i.e., more 3-year-olds. From FY 88 through FY 93, aggregate performance rankings have shown a slight increase in the number of children ranked in the above average and average categories across four academic and behavior categories.

For the first time in FY 93, individual students' IGAP scores were available. IGAP scores of the third and fourth grade students who had participated in the Prekindergarten At-Risk Program were collected. The data reveal that third grade reading, mathematics and writing IGAP scores were within one standard deviation of the state averages. However, the average fourth grade social science and science scores were lower than the statewide average.

This program addresses issues identified in the Illinois Goals 1, 4, 6 and 8. This program targets 3 to 5 year olds who are at risk of academic failure and helps prepare them to learn and progress successfully through school (Goal 1). Parent involvement and parent education are very important components of this program. All projects are required to establish and implement a strong parent involvement and parent education plan in their proposal (Goal 6).

This program also emphasizes coordination and collaboration between other programs and agencies to maximize the use of available resources (Goal 8). The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) coordinated about 38 workshops and seminars as part of a staff development program for staff at Prekindergarten At-Risk and other early childhood programs. More than 1,074 professionals participated in these workshops.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is a clear indication that the program has had a positive influence on kindergarten readiness and that performance levels have been sustained in early elementary grades. In FY 93, the program served 32% of a total 114,005, 3 and 4 year olds estimated at risk of academic failure. The state needs to continue to expand the program to make services available to all at-risk children.
- In FY 93, the total allocated for the program was \$75.5 million dollars, an increase of 7% from FY 92. The program served 36,182 children in FY 93, an increase of 22% from FY 92. The percentage increase in students served is greater than the percentage increase in available program dollars, clearly indicating an efficient use of funds. Further increases in funds would make services available to more children.

- The Prekindergarten Program data suggest that performance rankings for students from low-income and single-parent families tend to be lower than their counterparts who come from two-parent families and households with higher incomes. The school-level results also suggest that children from environments conducive to producing risk conditions are in need of services to a greater extent than are students from more stable environments. The Prekindergarten At-Risk Program should provide additional or different services targeted to higher levels of at-risk students and attempt to reduce the gap that currently exists between different populations of participating students.
- The overwhelming evidence of the importance and effects of parental involvement on the children's academic performance suggests that the at-risk program should continue emphasizing the role of parents and expand the level of involvement.
- The results of the longitudinal study reveal that the percentage of children in the below average category in reading, mathematics and language steadily increases as they move into higher grades. The State Board of Education should emphasize communication and collaboration between the elementary and prekindergarten administrations and teachers. The combined support and supplementary help to at-risk children in their elementary grades is necessary to their continued success in school. This need for collaborative support for sustaining performance levels in early grades has been recognized by leading experts on early childhood education and school reform.

The need to provide instruction and services that fit changing family structures is overwhelming for the successful reform in the elementary school. Efforts should be concentrated on disadvantaged students' success in the first three years. If students fail to master basic skills by the third grade, they are at high risk of developing serious problems later on. If the child faces failure in school in early years, the harder it is for a child to turn the tide. Therefore, early grades should be seen as pivotal years in a child's school career.¹

The National Task Force on School Readiness states that the national agenda for advancing readiness "requires that kindergarten and primary grade classrooms exhibit a blend of high expectations, high support, and engaging activities in which students work and learn together in different ways. We base this design on the strong consensus held by early childhood educators and educational researchers on effective approaches to teaching and learning reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies."²

¹ Lloyd, D.N. Prediction of School Failure from Third-Grade Data. *Educational and Psychological Measurement* 38 1978: (Cited in Starting Right Reforming Education in the Early Grades. Report based on a meeting held at Carnegia Cooperation of New York, June 1992).

² *Caring Communities: Supporting Young Children and Families*, p. 33. The report of the National Task Force on School Readiness. Sponsored by the National Association of State Boards of Education. N.p. December 1991.

Dr. James P. Comer, professor of child psychiatry at Yale University, believes a lack of staff knowledge and understanding of key aspects of child development contributes to the mounting difficulties that children, particularly poor at-risk children experience in school and is coupled with the children's attitude and self-concept which place themselves as outsiders.³

Legters and Slavin (1992) state that strategies addressing only one or two problems have only limited impact. The constellation of interrelated problems demands an integrated set of strategies. Though effective approaches will differ in their particulars from the Comer and Slavin programs, each must work to change parental attitudes, the school climate, staff expectations, and other related aspects of the status quo if children are to succeed.⁴

- ³ Starting Right Reforming Education in the Early Grades. Report presented in the meeting at Carnegie Corporation of New York, June 1992.
- ⁴ Legters, N., and R.E. Slavin, Elementary Students at Risk: A Status Report. Paper commissioned by Carnegie Corporation of New York as a background paper for the consultation on the early grades, 1992.

APPENDIX A

State Board of Education Policy Statement on Early Childhood Education Adopted May 9, 1985 Springfield, Illinois

Early childhood education, for the purposes of this policy, constitutes those educational programs, practices, and services which have as a primary focus the developmental needs of children prior to the time they enter first grade. It will be the policy of the Illinois State Board of Education to seek such support as is necessary to encourage the development of early childhood education programs based on the following considerations:

- A) Positive, nurturing experiences in the early years of life are essential in helping children develop intellectually, socially, and emotionally, and future academic success in school is strongly influenced by the character of early experiences.
- B) Children identified as being at risk of academic failure can dramatically improve their chances for success through participation in early childhood education programs.
- C) Significant developmental differences exist among children, and particular attention should be given to such individual differences in the development of early education programs and services.
- D) Meeting the education, health, welfare, and safety needs of young children requires collaboration among various child care providers.
- E) The quality of instructional staff and leadership are especially critical elements in effective early childhood education programs.

Concurrent with Board action, the agency will:

- A) Design a comprehensive public awareness program to inform Illinois policymakers, citizens, parents, and educational personnel of the importance of early childhood education, and of the importance of parental involvement in such programs;
- B) Identify exemplary prekindergarten and kindergarten programs, widely disseminate findings and coordinate the training necessary to the wide adoption of such programs;
- C) Initiate and support efforts to improve the preservice and inservice training of early childhood education teachers, elementary teachers, and principals; and
- D) Engage in future study of the issue of parent education in Illinois schools, identify the range and character of needs, explore alternatives, and offer appropriate recommendations to the State Board of Education.

APPENDIX B

The School Code of Illinois

Sec. 2-3.71 Grants for preschool educational programs. (a) The State Board of Education shall implement and administer a grant program consisting of grants to public school districts to conduct preschool educational programs for children ages 3 to 5 which include a parent education component. A public school district which receives grants under this Section may subcontract with a private school, not-for-profit corporation or other governmental agency to conduct a preschool educational program. Except as otherwise provided in paragraphs (2) and (3) of this subsection (a), all teachers of such programs shall either (i) hold early childhood teaching certificates issued under Article 21, or ~~Section 34-03 of this code,~~ or (ii) hold elementary certificates issued under Article 21 with kindergarten or preschool experience, or (iii) hold baccalaureate degrees in child development, or (iv) shall meet the requirements for supervising a day care center under the Child Care Act of 1969, as amended.

(2) After the effective date of this Amendatory Act of 1989, any persons newly hired to teach in the program authorized pursuant to this Section shall hold the certification required pursuant to subparagraphs (i), (ii) or (iii) of paragraph (1) of this subsection.

(3) After July 1, 1998, any teacher in the program authorized by this Section shall hold an early childhood teaching certificate.

(b) The State Board of Education shall provide the primary source of funding through appropriations for this program. Such funds shall be distributed for the benefit of children who because of their home and community environment are subject to such language, cultural, economic and like disadvantages that they have been determined as a result of screening procedures to be at risk of academic failure. Such screening procedures shall be based on criteria established by the State Board of Education.

(c) The State Board of Education shall develop and provide evaluation tools, including tests, that school districts may use to evaluate children for school readiness prior to age 5. The State Board of Education shall require school districts to obtain consent from the parents or guardians of children before any evaluations are conducted. The State Board of Education shall encourage local school districts to evaluate the population of preschool children in their districts and provide preschool programs, pursuant to this Section, where appropriate.

d) The State Board of Education shall report to the General Assembly by July 1, 1989, and every 3 years thereafter, on the results and progress of students who were enrolled in preschool educational programs, including an assessment of which programs have been most successful in promoting academic excellence and alleviating academic failure. The State Board of Education shall assess the academic progress of all students who have been enrolled in preschool educational programs.

APPENDIX C

Table 14. Assessment of Prekindergarten Children in Elementary Grades in FY 93

	Above Average %	Average %	Below Average %	Deficient %
Reading				
Kindergarten	27%	50%	20%	4%
First Grade	23%	47%	19%	6%
Second Grade	24%	49%	22%	5%
Third Grade	22%	48%	25%	5%
Fourth Grade	19%	49%	27%	5%
Fifth Grade	21%	50%	26%	3%
Mathematics				
Kindergarten	28%	54%	16%	3%
First Grade	29%	54%	13%	4%
Second Grade	24%	56%	16%	4%
Third Grade	23%	53%	20%	4%
Fourth Grade	20%	50%	24%	6%
Fifth Grade	20%	49%	25%	6%
Language				
Kindergarten	27%	55%	16%	2%
First Grade	25%	56%	15%	4%
Second Grade	22%	56%	18%	4%
Third Grade	21%	54%	22%	3%
Fourth Grade	19%	54%	23%	4%
Fifth Grade	21%	52%	24%	3%
Behavior				
Kindergarten	33%	50%	14%	3%
First Grade	34%	50%	12%	4%
Second Grade	31%	50%	15%	4%
Third Grade	32%	49%	15%	4%
Fourth Grade	33%	47%	16%	4%
Fifth Grade	33%	47%	15%	5%

Kindergarten n = 3,837; First Grade n = 2,797
 Second Grade n = 1,887; Third Grade n = 1,042
 Fourth Grade n = 888; Fifth Grade n = 641

**Table 15. FY 93 FINANCIAL SUMMARY
Prekindergarten At-Risk Program**

SOURCES OF FUNDS

\$76,146,295 State Prekindergarten Fund
 \$ 73,732 Other State Educational Funds
 \$ 189,472 Other Sources (Federal Funds, Foundation Funds, etc.)
 \$ 1,766,519 Local Sources, Direct Contribution
 \$ 3,874,849 Local Sources, In-Kind Contribution
 \$82,050,867 TOTAL PROGRAM FUNDS

LINE	ACCT. NO.	EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS	TOTAL STATE FUND EXPENDITURE	TOTAL DIRECT EXPENDITURE (OTHER FUND)	IN-KIND EXPENDITURE	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
	(1)					
01		A Salaries and Fringe Benefits	43,750,382	773,616	438,353	44,962,351
02	Instr.	B Instructional Materials	1,167,021	23,741	15,422	1,206,184
03	100	C Instructional Equipment	1,604,091	9,339	12,590	1,626,020
04		D Teaching Supplies and All Other Expenses for Instruction	801,296	17,258	30,246	848,800
05	211	Attendance Services	955,363	53,330	125,046	1,133,739
06	212	Guidance Services	2,008,308	18,363	46,159	2,072,830
07	213	Health Services	1,190,139	11,030	134,656	1,335,825
08	214	Psychological Services	232,056	19,032	83,377	334,465
09	215	Speech and Audio Pathology Services	1,469,490	117,056	237,766	1,824,312
10	221	Improvement of Instruction	3,175,067	32,937	20,325	3,228,329
11	222	A Media Educational Materials	29,285	1,626	7,606	38,517
12		B Media Educational Equipment	21,073	221	21,044	42,338
13	230	General Administration	2,663,386	64,647	620,704	3,348,737
14	240	School Administration	-	-	-	-
15	251/ 252	Business/Fiscal Services	111,671	8,357	148,141	268,169
16	253	Construction and Remodeling	-	7,233	116,095	123,328
17	254	Operation and Maintenance	2,430,312	81,779	1,331,264	3,843,355
18	255	Pupil Transportation	4,383,488	653,481	350,412	5,387,381
19	256	Food Services	789,272	26,716	60,656	876,644
20	257	Internal Services	9,944	25	6,234	16,203
21	260	Central Services	475,344	7,555	19,080	501,979
22	290	Supporting Services - Other	267,065	14,867	38,985	320,917
23	300	Community Services	5,347,092	84,600	10,101	5,441,793
24	410	Payments to Other Governmental Units	3,265,151	2,914	586	3,268,651
25	TOTAL EXPENDITURES		76,146,295	2,029,723	3,874,849	
26	TOTAL PROJECT EXPENDITURES		-	-	-	82,050,867

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APPENDIX D

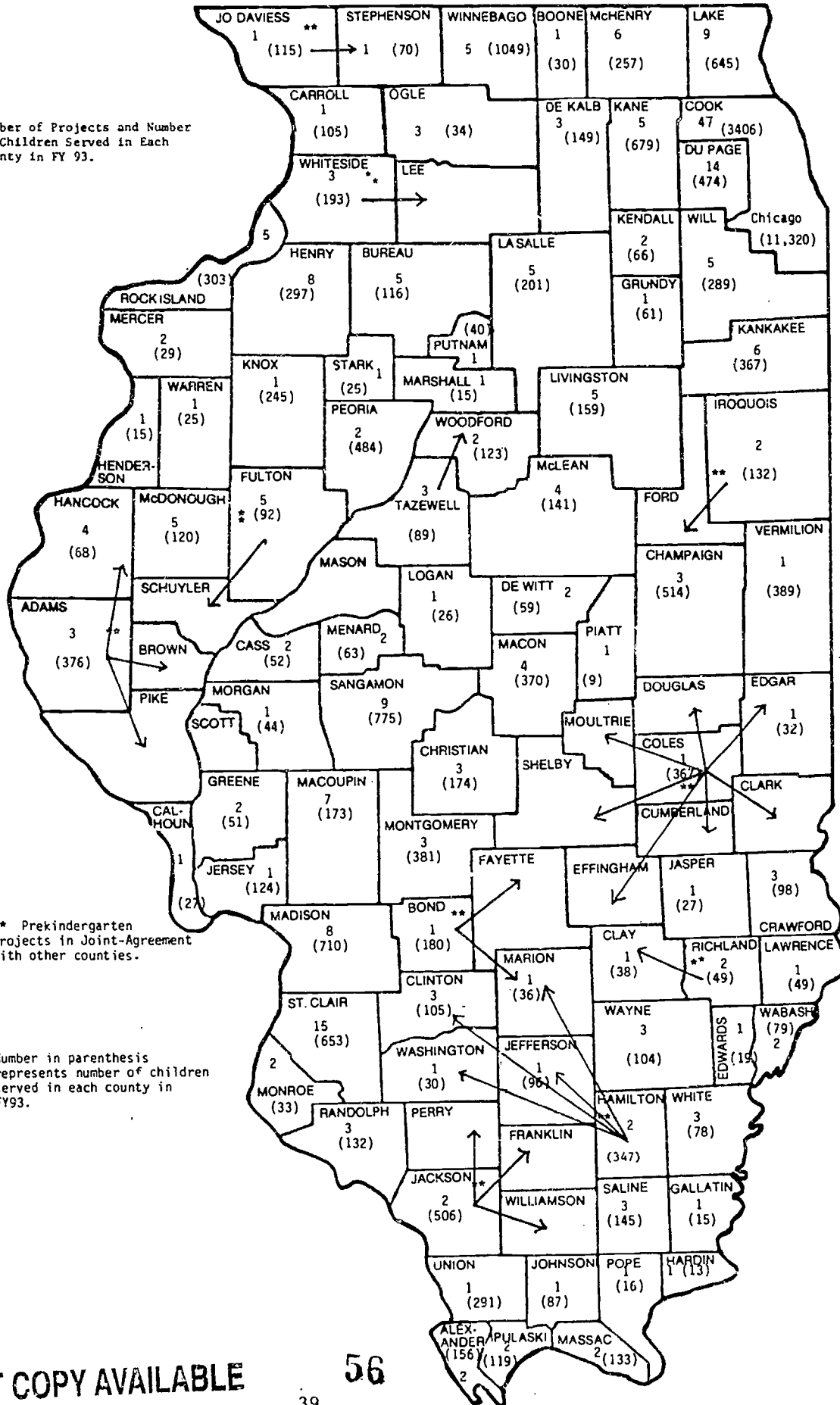
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Figure 13

Number of Projects and Number of Children Served in Each County in FY 93.



** Prekindergarten Projects in Joint-Agreement with other counties.

Number in parenthesis represents number of children served in each county in FY93.

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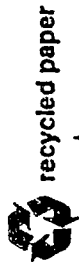


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