Implementation of the Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Program:
A Statewide Evaluation

UNC SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
UNC FRANK PORTER GRAHAM CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

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Implementation of the Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Program:
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Executive Summary

Overview of the Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Program

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts (PA PKC) is a state-funded prekindergarten program for 3- and 4-year-old children to help them gain school readiness skills. The goal of PA PKC is to help reduce educational disparities by providing high quality prekindergarten for children who lack opportunities or reside in environments that place them at risk of school failure. The PA PKC program regulations and guidelines define children at risk as those who are living in households below 300 percent of the federal poverty rate, are English Language Learners (ELL), or who are at risk due to community factors, academic difficulties, or economic disadvantage.

PA PKC spaces are offered in school districts, Head Start, Department of Education privately licensed nursery schools, and high quality child care settings. Children attend 180 days per year, with either half-day or full-day options. The program regulations include a number of other guidelines consistent with high quality, including teacher qualifications, curriculum and instruction, screening and assessment, classroom self-assessments, and family engagement.

Study Purpose

The Implementation Study was designed to examine local variations in the statewide implementation of PA PKC in relation to the program regulations and early learning standards. The study entailed surveys with three groups of families (current PA PKC families, former PA PKC families in kindergarten, comparison families in kindergarten), surveys and interviews with PA PKC administrators, and PA PKC administrative data. This process evaluation focused on issues related to the extent of variability in implementation of PA PKC, effectiveness of family engagement, adequacy of supports for continuous quality improvement, and implementation challenges in supporting children's school readiness.

Research Questions

The Implementation Study addressed four primary questions:

1. How much local variation exists in the implementation of PA PKC program regulations and standards?
2. As key stakeholders, how effectively are families engaged in and supported by PA PKC? How does PA PKC view their role in supporting family engagement?
3. To what extent is adequate support provided by local PA PKC programs and by OCDEL for continuous quality improvement?
4. To what extent are key factors (geographic region and urbanicity/rurality, program size, percent 3-year-olds, provider type, teacher credentials) associated with greater or lesser implementation challenges? What are recommended suggestions for improvement?

Results

Variability in Implementation

- Many of the PA PKC program regulations are designed to allow local variability based on community needs. Accordingly, administrators reported substantial variation in the selection of enrollment prioritization factors and in the populations targeted for recruitment, although many acknowledged that some higher-priority populations may be harder to reach. There was greater consistency regarding regulations for enrolling children with disabilities and coordinating services, and for the use of an approved curriculum and assessment in alignment with the early learning standards.

Family Engagement

- PA PKC regulations include a family involvement plan and supportive activities. Families perceived the program positively in terms of satisfaction ratings, staff supportiveness, and help with kindergarten transition. Administrators were more likely to define and implement family engagement activities related to communication and collaboration between the agency and the families than related to families' voices and roles.
- Transition to kindergarten is a key aspect of children and families' experiences in PA PKC. Just over 60% of PA PKC administrators used the suggested OCDEL Transition Best Practices Rubric and Transition Tool Kit for developing transition plans, although nearly all implemented some types of transition activities.

Continuous Quality Improvement

- PA PKC administrators generally had positive perceptions about the level of implementation supports provided by OCDEL and about their work environment. There was some variability in the education and certification levels of teaching staff and the frequency of mentoring supports.
- Nearly all administrators reported updating and using most types of data, as indicated in the PA PKC regulations, although they found data systems other than PELICAN or child assessment tools more useful for continuous quality improvement.

Implementation Challenges

- A substantial proportion of administrators (one-third) reported a high level of implementation challenges. Administrators who reported higher levels of implementation challenges were more likely to enroll higher proportions of 3-year-olds and to be community-based provider types (child care, Head Start, licensed nursery) than school districts.
- One ongoing challenge for many programs underlying various aspects of implementation relates to communication with families in their home language.
- Administrators offered some suggestions for program improvement, but also expressed positive perceptions of the program.

Recommendations

Based on these results, the following recommendations are offered.

1. In order to ensure that PA PKC is recruiting, enrolling, serving, and engaging families and children in all target populations, provide greater assistance to local programs with strategies for outreach to populations that are challenging to reach and for communication with families and children who speak languages other than English.
2. More opportunities should be provided to families for deeper engagement in order to allow them stronger roles and voices within the program, as well as to further enhance the level of staff support. Specifically, more engagement opportunities around policy and decision-making and adult-focused activities should be offered.
3. The process of using the OCDEL Transition Best Practices Rubric and Transition Tool Kit for developing transition plans should be further examined to determine how to facilitate the use of this tool and whether revisions are needed.

   4. Providing further support to local programs and opportunities for sharing successfulapproaches around transition practices, mentoring and other related practices for obtaining and maintaining highly qualified staff, and data use and reporting may be useful in enhancing continuous quality improvement efforts.
5. Further examination of specific implementation challenges faced by community-based PA PKC programs as opposed to school districts and by those enrolling higher proportions of 3-year-olds is recommended, in order to determine ways to improve both program implementation and children's school readiness outcomes.

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Overview of the Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Program

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts (PA PKC) is a state-funded prekindergarten program for 3- and 4-year-old children to help them gain school readiness skills. The goal of PA PKC is to help reduce educational disparities by providing high quality prekindergarten for children who lack opportunities or reside in environments that place them at risk of school failure. The PA PKC program regulations and guidelines define children at risk as those who are living in households below 300 percent of the federal poverty rate, are English Language Learners (ELL), or who are at risk due to community factors, academic difficulties, or economic disadvantage.[i, ii]

PA PKC is the largest of the four preschool programs overseen by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, in addition to the Ready to Learn Block Grant, Pennsylvania Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program, and the Pennsylvania Four-Year-Old Kindergarten and School-based Prekindergarten programs. A total of 30,527 children were served in state preschool programs in Pennsylvania in 2017-18, comprising 14% of all 4-year-olds and 7% of all 3-year-olds in the state.[iii] This number increased to 44,756 children in 2018-19, comprising 20% of 4-year-olds and 10% of 3-year-olds in the state.[iv] The majority of these children were enrolled in PA PKC, including 20,674 in 2017-18 and 25,140 in 2018-19 (the years children in this study attended PA PKC).

PA PKC is available to children from families earning up to 300% of the federal poverty level, with priority given to children with other risk factors. In particular, local programs prioritize enrollment based on community need for income-eligible children who are English language learners, homeless, have parents with low education levels, are receiving behavioral supports, are in the child welfare system, have an incarcerated parent, have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), are migrant seasonal students, have a teen mother, or have a sibling in the program. PA PKC spaces are offered in school districts, Head Start, Department of Education privately licensed nursery schools, and high quality child care settings. Children attend 180 days per year, with either half-day or full-day options. The program regulations include a number of other guidelines consistent with high quality, including teacher qualifications (e.g., Department of Education Early Childhood Education Instructional certification for lead teachers), curriculum and instruction (approved curriculum aligned with the state early learning standards[v]), screening and assessment (conduct developmental screenings, health-related screenings, and ongoing assessment for instructional purposes using approved tools), classroom self-assessments (required annual participation), and family engagement (develop and implement a plan).

Purpose of the Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Implementation Study

The current study was designed to examine local variations in the statewide implementation of PA PKC in relation to the program regulations and early learning standards. The Implementation Study entailed surveys with three groups of families (current PA PKC families, former PA PKC families in kindergarten, comparison families in kindergarten), surveys and interviews with PA PKC administrators, and PA PKC administrative data. Data were gathered from each of these sources and were mapped onto the program regulations and guidelines and early learning standards in order to address the research questions. This process evaluation focused on issues related to the extent of variability in implementation of PA PKC, effectiveness of family engagement, adequacy of supports for continuous quality improvement, and implementation challenges in supporting children's school readiness.

A companion Impact Study examined the effects of participation in PA PKC on children's skills in kindergarten compared to non-participants, as well as whether there were any differential effects of enrollment for 1 year (starting at age 4) vs 2 years (starting at age 3).[vi] In the Impact Study, we found overall effects for PA PKC participation on language and math skills, with no differences in results for children who attended for 1 year or 2 years. There also were no differences in the effects of PA PKC on children's outcomes on the basis of program characteristics—the percent of 3-year-olds enrolled in PA PKC, geographic region, or urbanicity/rurality. The current Implementation Study provides further information about the extent of variability in program characteristics and how they may relate to differences in program implementation, including information that may provide additional contextual understanding for the Impact Study results.

The Implementation Study addressed four primary questions:

1. How much local variation exists in the implementation of PA PKC program regulations and standards?
2. As key stakeholders, how effectively are families engaged in and supported by PA PKC? How does PA PKC view their role in supporting family engagement?
3. To what extent is adequate support provided by local PA PKC programs and by OCDEL for continuous quality improvement?
4. To what extent are key factors (geographic region and urbanicity/rurality, program size, percent 3-year-olds, provider type, teacher credentials) associated with greater or lesser implementation challenges? What are recommended suggestions for improvement?

Method

Sample and Data Sources

Six sources of data were gathered: 1) surveys distributed to all PA PKC families (n=3,431), 2) surveys during kindergarten for a sample of former PA PKC families (n=247), 3) surveys during kindergarten for a comparison sample of families with no prior preschool experience (PA PKC or any other type of center-based program, family child care, or home-based care) in the 2 years prior to kindergarten entry (n=102), 4) surveys distributed to all PA PKC administrators (n=189), 5) semi-structured interviews with a sample of PA PKC administrators (n=69), and 6) PA PKC state administrative data (PELICAN). Surveys and interviews were designed by the research team, with input and feedback from OCDEL, to capture information about variability in the implementation of program regulations and standards related to the key research questions. Ad-

ministrative data were obtained from PELICAN (Pennsylvania's Enterprise to Link Information for Children Across Networks).

Measures and Procedures

Family surveys examined perceptions of support for their family and their child's learning. They included standardized scales related to eight topic areas: 1) involvement in child's learning, 2) role as a parent, 3) thoughts about school, 4) social supports, 5) transition to kindergarten, 6) thoughts about child's PA PKC preschool, 7) role as a PA PKC preschool parent, and 8) relationships with PA PKC preschool staff. (Note that topics 6-8 were excluded for comparison group families.) Administrator surveys and interviews examined implementation practices around seven topic areas: 1) recruitment and enrollment, 2) curriculum and assessment, 3) family engagement, 4) coordination and collaboration, 5) special populations, 6) continuous quality improvement, and 7) staffing.

Survey and interview items were mapped onto the program regulations and guidelines and early learning standards in order to examine how administrators and families reported variability in implementation, the extent to which key program factors were associated with program variability and implementation success and challenges, stakeholder perceptions and supports, and supports for continuous quality improvement. (See the Appendix for a list of the Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Program regulations and standards related to the study measures.)

Family surveys were gathered during the spring of the 2018-19 school year, including current PA PKC families in preschool and former PA PKC participants and comparison group families in kindergarten. Family surveys were distributed in both electronic and paper format (based upon individual preference) to the kindergarten sample of participants in the companion Impact Study by the researchers and to all PA PKC families via the administrators and program specialists. Response rates were 15% (3,431/22,379) for the current PA PKC sample (which is generally considered a good response rate for an overall mailing by the program) and 59% (349/592) for the kindergarten sample.

PA PKC administrator surveys were distributed to all current PA PKC administrators and gathered online during the early fall of the 2019-20 school year. Response rates for the administrator surveys were 87% (189/218). A stratified sample of PA PKC administrators was randomly selected from the survey respondents based on six geographic regions (Northwest, North Central, Northeast, Southwest, South Central, Southeast) and urban/rural status, consistent with the sampling approach for the Impact Study. (Note that there were no PA PKC programs in the North Central urban stratum and fewer available in the Northwest urban and Southeast rural strata.) Phone interviews were conducted during the late fall/early winter of the 2019-20 school year. Administrative data from PELICAN were obtained for the corresponding prekindergarten years. Response rates for the administrator interviews were 77% (69/90).

Analysis Approach

Descriptive analyses were conducted for family and administrator survey items, including means and standard deviations and frequencies and percentages, as appropriate. Administrator interview items were coded for key themes, summarized, and reviewed for pertinent quotes. The results from the survey and interview data were then integrated, and these descriptive findings were examined for patterns related to the primary questions of interest. PELICAN administrative data for PA PKC Programs were matched to the corresponding administrator survey data, and key program characteristics were included in analyses.

Two further sets of inferential analyses were conducted. First, comparisons between current and former PA PKC families and between former and no ECE comparison families (with no early childhood education experience in the 2 prior years) based on family survey data were conducted using t-tests. Second, the associations of six key program characteristic variables with the overall administrator survey ratings of implementation challenges were examined using chi-square analyses. The implementation challenges variable used was a total mean rating (high≥2.0 vs low<2.0), based on a mean of individual item scores (1=not at all harder, 2=somewhat harder, 3=a great deal harder). The program characteristics variables were based on administrator survey data – urban/rural, geographic region (based on PA Department of Education - Northwest, North Central, Northeast, Southwest, South Central, and Southeast), percentage of 3-year-olds enrolled in PA PKC (4 categories – 0-25%, 26-50%, 51-75%, 76-100%), program size (small=1-40, moderate=41-100, large=101-500, extra large=501-4000); and PELICAN administrative data – provider type (Head Start, child care, school district, licensed nursery, third-party entity) and lead teacher certification (Instructional Level I or above).

Results

Information about characteristics of the sample and PA PKC program characteristics (geographic region and urbanicity/rurality, program size, percent 3-year-olds, provider type, teacher credentials) are described below. Key findings from the descriptive and inferential analyses of the survey, interview, and administrative data are then presented for each of the primary research questions. These results are interpreted in relation to the PA PKC program regulations and guidelines and early learning standards, as applicable. Pertinent quotes from the interview data are included where relevant. These findings are followed by tables and figures containing the complete descriptive and analytic results for survey items from the administrator and family surveys, organized by the applicable PA PKC program regulations and early learning standards.

Respondent and Program Characteristics

PA PKC administrators in the study sample were highly experienced and educated overall. Administrators had an average of 19 years of experience in the early childhood field (see Table 1). Almost two-thirds (64%) had a master's degree or above and most of the rest (28%) had a bachelor's degree, with about half having degrees in ECE, education, or child development (see Table 1). The majority of respondents in the administrator sample were female (93%) and White (96%), with few of Latinx, Hispanic or Spanish ethnicity (1%), as seen in Table 2. About 11% spoke a language other than English, and most of those (4% overall) spoke Spanish (see Table 2). Corresponding demographic information was not available for the participants in the family surveys.

There was some variability in the distribution of PA PKC Programs by urban/rural locations and

geographic regions, based on administrator reports (see Table 3). Slightly more than half of the PA PKC programs were in urban areas, and slightly more of the programs were in the Southeast and Southwest and fewer in the North Central regions.

PA PKC Programs varied in terms of overall size and ages served, based on administrator reports. Almost half of the programs were small (enrollment=40 or less) and about a quarter each were moderate (enrollment=41-100) or large (enrollment=101-500), as seen in Table 4. Most administrators reported enrolling both 3- and 4-year-olds in PA PKC classrooms, in an average of almost 10 classrooms (see Table 5). On average, PA PKC classrooms were about half mixed-age, almost one-quarter 4-year-olds, and 5% 3-year-olds within programs (see Table 5). The number of children enrolled varied substantially across programs (see SD values); relatively more 4-year-olds than 3-year-olds were enrolled for both PA PKC and non-PA PKC classrooms, although more 4-year-olds were in PA PKC classrooms (see Table 5). Most administrators indicated that the overall proportion of 3-year-olds enrolled in PA PKC was 50% or less (including those that served no 3-year-olds), with about one-third indicating up to 25% were 3-year-olds and another 60% indicating up to 50% were 3-year-olds (see Table 6 and Figure 1).

Based on PELICAN administrative data for PA PKC Programs in the Implementation Study sample, almost one-third each were Head Start, child care providers, and school districts, with few private licensed nurseries (see Table 7).

In about two-thirds of these PA PKC Programs, all of the lead teachers met the requirements for certification (Instructional Level I or greater) based on the program regulations for staffing and professional development (see Table 8 and Figure 2).

Variability in Implementation

How much local variation exists in the implementation of PA PKC program regulations and standards?

Many of the PA PKC program regulations are designed to allow local variability based on community needs. Accordingly, administrators reported substantial variation in the implementation of regulations related to targeting children to be served and enrollment, as well as coordination and collaboration with other agencies providing services to young children. There was greater consistency in local implementation of regulations regarding the requirements to provide inclusive environments. There also was little variability in the implementation of regulations around the use of an approved curriculum and assessment in alignment with the early learning standards.

Targeting children to be served / Enrollment

Programs varied somewhat in the enrollment priorities for children. About 40%–65% of PA PKC administrators reported that most risk factors noted in the program guidelines were included in their prioritization strategies, with few (5%) administrators reporting all factors were weighed the same (see Table 9). In accord with likely variability in community needs, migrant seasonal student (22%) was the one less frequently reported factor, with another 11% reporting a variety of other factors. In addition, almost two-thirds (64%) of administrators reported prioritizing enrollment of 4-year-olds and 41% prioritized children residing in their school district.

Programs incorporated a variety of methods for recruitment, with about 80% of respondents

using a website and social media as well as posting flyers, and more than half recruiting through online advertising as well as education programs (elementary schools, other ECE programs) and open house meetings (see Table 10). Almost half the respondents reported their programs only provided materials in English and about half in Spanish, with few offering materials in any other language (see Table 11). However, the reported percentages of children who speak most languages was somewhat higher, with generally few teachers or aides available who speak the child's language (see Table 12). About half of administrators reported serving children who speak other languages, with a slightly lower percentage reporting their program has goals for children who are DLLs (see Table 12).

Administrators noted some more successful strategies for recruitment in the interviews related to community connections and social relationships (word of mouth referrals, social media, flyers, information sent home from school). However, there was acknowledgement that even successful recruitment strategies may be more challenging among low-income populations.

> *"I think the most successful strategy is word of mouth, especially from currently enrolled families or past families …because families want to hear from people that they're close with. Especially for Pre-K Counts, a lot of the children are coming in having never been in any type of program before, so when they hear from other families they know that the program is free and that they like the teacher and the program is clean and safe and all those things, and they're able to provide them with a lot of information up front, it helps them feel empowered and it helps them feel safe."*

Nearly all interview respondents acknowledged that some populations which may be of higher priority within their communities are more difficult to reach due to barriers related to accessibility around recruitment information and program participation, which can lead to broader challenges around program awareness and acceptance.

> *"We're very rural….[County] especially has some pockets where cell service is limited, internet is limited, so there are some kind of remote locations, so I'd say we might be missing some of those folks. And in those communities, we find it's very – I don't want to say 'closed' – but they tend to trust family and friends with the care of their kids, so they're not necessarily out seeking agencies. It's more of a close-knit community. So we might be missing some pockets of kids."*

> *"I think we have to research more what happens in rural communities and perhaps put ourselves out there into whatever events they may be going to."*

Coordination and Collaboration

PA PKC regulations related to collaboration and coordination (as well as targeting children to be served and enrollment) describe provisions for working with other agencies in the community providing services to young children on outreach and other activities. Most PA PKC administrators (more than 70%) reported their agencies collaborated with other education and child care organizations (school systems, Head Start, child care, CCR&R) around recruitment and

enrollment (see Table 13). There was more variability in the extent of collaborations with other types of organizations (e.g., health, mental health, family and community-oriented agencies) for recruitment and enrollment.

PA PKC administrators reported some differences in the types of collaborations with community agencies for assistance with services to families. Almost two-thirds of administrators reported that their PA PKC Programs established formal collaborations with community agencies that could help families with various services, especially mental health, dental, and food or other emergency assistance, while over one-third indicated that they had no formal collaborations (see Table 14).

> *"We've started to think about all pre-k programs, in addition to the Pre-K Counts program, as regional endeavors. … Most of our families that are transient move between four or five communities. So if we can start to think that there are regional solutions instead of just district-wide solutions, I think we may have a better chance of capturing that family."*

Inclusive Environments

Nearly all (94%) PA PKC administrators reported that their programs enrolled children with disabilities, at an average of 13% of the children enrolled (see Table 15). This is well below the initial enrollment maximum of 20% specified in the program regulations and within expected population ranges. Nearly all respondents reported coordination with various types of early intervention services (as required in the regulations). There was variability in the percentage of programs providing different types of services and whether they were provided by internal or external staff, although the vast majority had speech/language therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy, and over half provided psychological/psychiatric services and nutrition services. Most services were provided inside the classroom in the majority of programs (as indicated in the program guidance), although some programs offered services both inside and outside the classroom. (See Table 16.)

> *"I think that the general purpose of our program has always been to be inclusive. Every one of our preschool classrooms is a mixture of kids with IEPs and typically-developing kids, so I think we definitely do that."*

PA PKC Program guidelines include a policy statement on reduction of suspensions and expulsions under the regulation on inclusive environments. Administrators described various strategies for limiting suspensions and expulsions during the interviews, including engaging parents and providing a designated behavior management team to address challenging behaviors. Notably, a number of agencies stated their intentions to never suspend or expel a child, although some indicated that they would work with the family to find an alternate placement if PA PKC were no longer appropriate.

> *"We've never, since I've been in this role, had to suspend or expel a child. And I really think part of that comes from, when we initially speak with parents, we really talk to them not just about our investment into their child and their family, but also*

the buy-in from parent too. We recognize that they're the first teacher to their child and we value their input… And when we're bringing any potential concern to them, we understand that the information can be difficult to receive and hear. We're not attacking them or passing judgment, but we're providing them data on their child, on what our concern is, and providing them with information on how can we help."

Curriculum and Assessment

Almost all (90%) of the PA PKC administrators reported using at least one approved curriculum, with over two-thirds using Creative Curriculum. About 45% of administrators reported the use of additional domain-specific curricula, with about 11% including approved domain-specific curricula. A range of domain-specific curricula were indicated, primarily related to social-emotional development and language and literacy development. (See Table 17.)

Based on the interviews, only a small percentage (12%) of administrators in programs serving both 3- and 4-year-olds reported differentiation of instruction based on age, with different curricula and instructional practices based on age group. In contrast, most administrators (84%) reported that teachers differentiate instruction based on children's developmental level for most key areas included in the early learning standards (e.g., math, language/literacy, executive function), with slightly fewer (75%) differentiating for social-emotional skills.

Correspondingly, over 60% of the respondents used Teaching Strategies Gold (the companion assessment to Creative Curriculum) as their primary assessment tool and almost 40% used the Work Sampling System. Almost all respondents indicated that their programs conducted assessments at least twice per year, with over three-quarters conducting assessments at least three times per year, consistent with the recommended beginning, middle, and end of year formative assessment schedule. (See Table 18.) There was some variability in how administrators reported using assessment data in their PA PKC Programs (based on interview respondents), with about 60% for improving classroom instruction and sharing information with parents, and almost half for individualizing instruction.

Family Engagement

As key stakeholders, how effectively are families engaged in and supported by PA PKC? How does PA PKC view their role in supporting family engagement?

PA PKC regulations indicate that programs should develop a plan for family involvement that informs them of program goals, instructional strategies, and child progress and involves them in supportive activities to help ensure their child's success. Both administrator and family perceptions were examined, including PA PKC families (current PA PKC and former PA PKC in kindergarten) and comparison families (no ECE). In addition, transition to kindergarten was specifically examined because it is a key aspect of children's and families' experiences in PA PKC and an important component of the PA PKC regulation on program transition planning and the Early Learning Standards on Partnerships for Learning. Families perceived the program positively in terms of satisfaction ratings, staff supportiveness, and help with kindergarten transition. Administrators were more likely to define and implement family engagement activities related to communication and collaboration between the agency and the families than related to families' voices and roles.

Family Perceptions

Families who participated in PA PKC perceived their relationships with program staff as moder-

ately supportive, on average. Current PA PKC families rated the program slightly higher than did families who had participated in the program during the previous year (ES=0.4-0.7). Current PA PKC families also had slightly higher satisfaction ratings of the program experiences for their children and families, although average ratings were high for both groups (ES=0.3). (See Table 19.)

> *"The one area where I think we could improve upon is that idea of preparing parents more. I think it's different when you're working in the early childhood field, [there are] more nurturing, relationship-based ideas, and I think sometimes we may be doing a disservice to some of our families, because when you get to the public school system, that relationship is different."*

One possible challenge to family-staff relationships may be that a wider range of languages is needed for communication with families than there are staff available who can communicate in those languages (see Table 20).

There were no differences among families (current PA PKC, former PA PKC, comparison) with regard to their confidence in supporting their child's learning or their beliefs about what helps their child be successful in school, with fairly high average scores across all groups. Current PA PKC families rated their level of involvement in their child's school higher than former PA PKC families, which likely reflects differences in parent involvement during the PA PKC Program compared to kindergarten (ES=0.4). (See Table 21.)

> *"Believe it or not, many our families work. A lot of people think, 'oh, if you're 100% of the poverty level, you must not be working.' That really isn't the case. Many of our families are trying to piecemeal multiple low-paying, part-time jobs together, that leave them with these kind of crazy schedules. …When our families aren't working or have the flexibility to get off, they are usually engaged. But our families who are struggling to put together a work picture that makes sense for them, they are probably less engaged in this manner. Not that they're not engaged in their child's education, but they're less engaged in more formally-scheduled activities."*

Former PA PKC families also reported a greater level of external social supports (professional services, programs/organizations) than comparison group families (ES=0.2-0.3). Among PA PKC families, current participants reported higher overall levels of social supports than former participants (ES=0.2-0.4).
(See Table 22.)

Program Perceptions

PA PKC administrators most commonly defined family engagement in terms of communication and collaboration between the agency and the families, especially around support for children's learning. Accordingly, nearly all respondents reported that their PA PKC Programs offered a variety of opportunities for family engagement in children's education and learning, both in terms of home and school. (See Table 23.)

> *"Success looks different for each family. I can't say overall, 'oh, if every family is volunteering, that's suc-*

cessful.' Because that's not reality. …We're working with families who might not have had a good school experience as well, so whatever's in their realm and their comfortability level, I would say is successful in my eyes."

"We often have our Pre-K Counts centers offer days and special opportunities and programs for parents and families to come in to the classroom to do something with their children, whether it's a snack where they can come in, or there's a day where they have special activities, just based around the families coming in. I do think that when you ask the families to come in and do something when their children are involved, that's definitely more successful than just asking them to come in for a meeting with the parents. I think you have to start by having the children be what draws them in. And then I think that, afterwards, that's when you get more of the parent committee meetings. And the children have to be the hook, because the children are excited about having them come in. It's hard to say no to them, when it's much easier to say no to the teacher, the adult."

However, the frequency of family engagement activities varied among programs from once or twice per year to weekly. One less common activity was toy or book lending programs, which about half of the respondents reported were regularly provided (monthly or weekly) and almost one-third reported were never offered (see Table 23).

PA PKC administrators also were less likely to define family engagement around families' voices and roles. Accordingly, there were fewer opportunities for family engagement through policy and program decision-making or workshops specifically focused on adult needs, although most respondents reported offering opportunities for families to evaluate the program (see Table 23).

"We define successful family engagement by the family's willingness to come in, work with us, conference with [the] teachers, come in and participate, to be an active part of the program and not just someone who drops the child off and runs away."

Kindergarten Transition

Just over 60% of PA PKC administrators reported developing transition plans using the OCDEL Transition Best Practices Rubric and Transition Tool Kit, although they rated it as useful on average (see Table 24). Nearly all respondents reported that their PA PKC Programs implemented some types of kindergarten transition activities, particularly around sharing transition information with parents and providing documentation about children and their program to the kindergartens (see Table 24). There was greater local variability in the implementation of other types of activities involving more direct family engagement or joint activities with the schools. Most administrators reported in interviews that the transition strategies used were effective and worked with different populations, although over half reported that better collaboration with the schools would facilitate the transition process.

Among kindergarten families, those who previously had participated in PA PKC were more likely to have participated in kindergarten transition activities (70%-80% of activities) than comparison group families (20%-60%), especially (not surprisingly) preschool-focused activities (ES=0.9–1.3). Among PA PKC families, former participants were more likely to have participated

in kindergarten transition activities than current families (70%-80% vs 50%), although there could have been some differences in ratings due to the timing of the surveys (ES= -0.5 – -0.8). There were no differences in the reported frequency of activities the PA PKC Program helped with, however, which was high for both groups (70%-90%). (See Table 25.)

> *"[Transition activities] are very, very popular. You kind of see that moment of doubt on [parents'] faces. …When we have our first event, that's just a meet and greet. They love it, they walk away relaxed, they'll walk away with an application, the children will walk away with a book…It's just a very family-friendly event and environment."*

Continuous Quality Improvement

To what extent is adequate support provided by local PA PKC programs and by OCDEL for continuous quality improvement?

PA PKC administrators generally had positive perceptions about their work environment and about the level of implementation supports provided by OCDEL, although they found other data systems more useful for continuous quality improvement. Most PA PKC administrators indicated they offered professional development plans and mentoring supports to teachers (program regulations for teacher induction plans and evaluations), although there was some variability in staff education and certification levels (staffing and professional development regulations).

OCDEL and Program Support

Administrators also had positive perceptions of the general quality of their work environment and overall satisfaction with their job. The majority felt positively about the program and believed that it is good for children and families (see Table 26).

Administrators generally perceived that OCDEL is providing adequate supports for implementation of their PA PKC Program with regard to assistance from preschool program specialists, information on regulations, adequacy of program infrastructure, and technical assistance (see Table 27).

> *"I do think that our preschool specialist has been amazing. Anytime I've had a question, I've gotten an answer quickly and thoroughly… she does a wonderful job of providing me with the information I need to ensure that our program is meeting the requirement."*

> *"For implementing the program, I appreciate that the regulations are provided, and now they're very concise. When the program first started, it was an announcement every other day. …So that has been a huge difference for me, that there is a set of guidelines and they're permanent."*

> *"Just to know that our questions can be answered, that we have the support, that teachers…have our support, …we have the support from the state…That's important."*

One key aspect of continuous quality improvement within an early childhood setting is to ensure that there are supports for obtaining and maintaining highly qualified teaching staff. There was some variability in the background and experience of teaching staff based on administrator surveys (see Table 28). Administrators reported that their PA PKC Programs employed an average of 5.5 lead teachers and 6 aides. The majority had worked with preschoolers for more than three years, with some expected variability in the education and certification levels within types of staff. Administrators reported that the majority of teaching staff had individual professional development plans, with a higher proportion for lead teachers (82%) than for aides (73%).

Most PA PKC administrators (about 80%) reported offering teachers mentoring supports (see Table 29). Just over half of administrators provided peer mentors from within the agency, and about one-quarter offered mentors from external agencies. About 40% of the respondents indicated that mentors provided feedback from 2–4 times per year, compared to monthly or more often by about one-third of the respondents. In contrast, mentor teachers never made classroom visits or made them less than once per month in about half the programs.

Data Use

Nearly all administrators reported using PELICAN or another system to track most kinds of data (see Table 30). PELICAN was more likely to be used for demographic (child, family, staff) and attendance data, whereas another system was more likely to be used for all other types of data (enrollment/waitlists, individual child developmental progress, child health/immunization status, staff training/in-service). The various types of data were updated at least annually by the majority of administrators (see Table 31). Most data were used somewhat more frequently, with about half or more of respondents reporting weekly or monthly data use for attendance, enrollment/waitlists, individual child developmental progress, and child health/immunization status (see Table 31). In contrast, although most administrators reported data on child and family demographic characteristics in PELICAN or other data systems, they were less frequently utilized than other types of data.

> *"I think one of the best indicators [of continuous quality improvement] is when we actually look at our child assessments, and you get that initial assessment where you see where kids come in at and then you see how much progress has been made. And when you're looking at that data year after year after year, you definitely see patterns. And then when you look at it per classroom, you can kind of see where children are struggling. Typically, if your kids are always – you know – if the same area is the lowest domain year after year, that's a good indicator that your staff really need some support on how to build the skill level in kids like that."*

Based on interview data, most administrators described other data systems (both formal and informal) or child assessment tools as most useful for continuous quality improvement, as opposed to PELICAN. Better data integration and coordination and greater access to reports were suggested as potential improvements to make PELICAN more useful for quality improvement purposes.

> *"Mostly it's our in-house systems, it's not the state's system so much. …There's some systems that it's difficult to get reports back, so I guess an easier access to gaining reports [would be an improvement.]"*

"We use PELICAN because we have to. [Laughter] There's a lot of redundancy and the reports aren't as beneficial..."

"Like any system, one of the drawbacks to the software is certain modules are not talking to each other. The early intervention piece and the health piece can be connected, but not the mental health piece."

Implementation Challenges

To what extent are key factors (geographic region and urbanicity/rurality, program size, percent 3-year-olds, provider type, teacher credentials) associated with greater or lesser implementation challenges? What are recommended suggestions for improvement?

A substantial proportion of administrators, about one-third, reported a high level of implementation challenges. Higher levels of implementation challenges were associated with serving higher proportions of 3-year-olds and with community-based providers, but were not associated with other program characteristics. One ongoing challenge for many programs underlying various aspects of implementation relates communication with families in their home language. Administrators offered some suggestions for program improvement, but also expressed positive perceptions of the program.

Implementation Challenges Ratings

Administrators rated a number of elements as making it somewhat harder to implement PA PKC (see Table 32). The top three implementation challenges related to dealing with a challenging population, time constraints, and too many conflicting demands. Staffing issues (lack of support staff, turnover) were among the next most frequently cited challenges. In contrast, salary and benefits were cited as the most effective strategies for retaining and promoting staff during the interviews.

"Money is the bottom-line. You know, making sure we have a competitive salary and an attractive benefits package that are similar to the school district, so that we can attract people and keep them. Retention is a huge part of our CQI. We focus on that heavily. And we've been very successful."

A substantial number of the PA PKC administrators, about one-third, reported an overall high level of implementation challenges (average score between somewhat to great deal harder). (See Table 32 and Figure 3.)

Factors Associated with Greater Implementation Challenges

Greater implementation challenges were associated with enrolling higher proportions of 3-year-olds ($p<.03$; see Table 33). Slightly more administrators in PA PKC Programs with greater than 50% 3-year-olds had high implementation challenges and fewer had lower implementation challenges ratings compared to programs with lower proportions of 3-year-olds. Relatively larger proportions of high implementation challenges ratings also were associated with being administrators for community-based provider types (Head Start, child care, private licensed nursery) as opposed to school districts ($p<.001$; see Table 34). There were no differences in the level of

implementation challenges by other program characteristics – geographic region, urbanicity, program size, or the proportion of teachers meeting certification standards (see Table 33 and Table 34).

Another challenge for many PA PKC programs underlying various aspects of implementation relates to communication with families. Approximately half of the PA PKC administrators reported that their programs have children and families who speak languages other than English (see Table 12 and Table 20). For these children and families, there are several challenges to program participation and related areas for program improvement, including the language of materials and the availability of staff who speak their home language – all of which can affect recruitment and enrollment, children's classroom participation, and family engagement (see Table 11 and Table 20).

Suggestions for Improvement

Some suggestions for program improvement based on the administrator interviews related to concerns around missing some children and families due to eligibility criteria, funding challenges related to classroom start-up costs and ongoing provision of high quality ECE, and contradictory and changing regulations.

> *"It was hard getting it off the ground. The only thing I wish they would provide is start-up money, almost like a bonus. We had applied for start-up money, and they very rarely give it."*

> *QUOTE: "It's hard catching up, when there's so many different regulations and expectations. That kind of thing is what impacts negatively the programs in the field. It creates confusion. It's like, 'I know we told you this is what you needed to do for five years, but now wait.'"*

Finally, it should be noted that many administrators expressed positive thoughts during the interviews about the benefit of PA PKC for children and families as well as about the contributions of the program staff.

> *"I think that it really, really helps a lot of families. I hope that it stays, I just hope that nothing ever happens to this program, because it helps so many families, so much -- academically, socially, in every way, in every domain. I don't know what some people would do if we didn't have this program."*

Recommendations

The Implementation Study provided an opportunity to examine local variations in the statewide implementation of PA PKC in relation to the program regulations and early learning standards. Because many of the program regulations and guidelines are designed to allow flexibility based on community needs, we were interested to discover the extent of variability across different regulatory areas. The evaluation also specifically examined family engagement, continuous quality improvement, and implementation challenges.

Based on these results, the following recommendations are offered.

1. In order to ensure that PA PKC is recruiting, enrolling, serving, and engaging families and children in all target populations, provide greater assistance to local programs with strategies for outreach to populations that are challenging to reach and for communication with families and children who speak languages other than English.
2. More opportunities should be provided to families for deeper engagement in order to allow them stronger roles and voices within the program, as well as to further enhance the level of staff support. Specifically, more engagement opportunities around policy and decision-making and adult-focused activities should be offered.
3. The process of using the OCDEL Transition Best Practices Rubric and Transition Tool Kit for developing transition plans should be further examined to determine how to facilitate the use of this tool and whether revisions are needed.
4. Providing further support to local programs and opportunities for sharing successful approaches around transition practices, mentoring and other related practices for obtaining and maintaining highly qualified staff, and data use and reporting may be useful in enhancing continuous quality improvement efforts.
5. Further examination of specific implementation challenges faced by community-based PA PKC programs as opposed to school districts and those enrolling higher proportions of 3-year-olds is recommended, in order to determine ways to improve both program implementation and children's school readiness outcomes.

Tables and Figures

Respondent and Program Characteristics

TABLE 1. WORK AND EDUCATION HISTORY OF PENNSYLVANIA PRE-K COUNTS PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS IN STUDY SAMPLE (2018–2019)

	n	Mean	(SD)
Years Employed by Program	174	11.4	9.7
Years Worked with Any Early Childhood Program	174	18.9	10.8
		%	n
Education	176		
High School Diploma/Equivalent		0.6	1
Voc/Tech Diploma After High School		0.6	1
Associates		6.3	11
Bachelors		28.4	50
Masters		54.5	96
Doctorate		9.7	17
Field of Highest Degree	174		
Child Development or Development Psychology		5.2	9
Early Childhood Education		28.2	49
Elementary Education		14.9	26
Other		51.7	90
Schooling Included 6 or More College Courses in ECE or Child Development	174	82.8	144
Completed 6 or More Courses in ECE or Child Development Since Degree Completed	173	45.7	79
Professional Certifications	175		
Child Development Associate (CDA)		5.1	9
State-Awarded Preschool Certificate		10.9	19
Course on Child Dual Language Learners		7.4	13
Teaching Certificate or License		64.0	112
Other Job-Related Licenses		41.1	72
Member of a Professional Association for Early Childhood Education		60.6	106
None		8.0	14

Table 2. Demographic Information about Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Program Administrators in Study Sample (2018–2019)

	Total n	Mean	(SD)
Annual Income (Dollars)	163	57,551	32,540
		%	n
Gender	175		
Male		7.4	162
Female		92.6	13
Latinx, Hispanic, or Spanish Ethnicity	171	1.2	2
Race	169		
White		95.9	162
Black/African American		3.0	5
Other		1.2	2
Speak a Language Other Than English	171		
All		10.5	18
Spanish		4.1	7
Other		7.0	12

Table 3. Urbanicity and Geographic Region of Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts (Administrator Level)

Program Characteristic (n=187)	n	%
Urbanicity		
Rural	87	46.5
Urban	100	53.5
Region[1]		
NC	15	8.0
NE	30	16.0
NW	24	12.8
SC	28	15.0
SE	43	23.0
SW	47	25.1

Table 4. Program Size of Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts (Administrator Level)

Program Size[2] (n=189)	n	%
Small	87	46.0
Moderate	56	29.6
Large	44	23.3
Extra Large	2	1.1

[1]NC=North Central, NE=Northeast, NW=Northwest, SC=South Central, SE=Southeast, SW=Southwest
[2]Small=1-40, Moderate=41-100, Large=101-500, Extra Large=501-4000

Table 5. Classroom Distributions by Age of Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Programs (2018-2019)

	Classrooms With PA PKC Children			Classrooms Without PA PKC Children		
	n	**Mean**	**(SD)**	**n**	**Mean**	**(SD)**
Number of Preschool Classrooms	181	9.6	11.8	173	5.7	11.5
Number of Infant/Toddler Classrooms (birth to under 3-years-old)	—	—	—	168	2.7	4.6
Proportion of Preschool Classrooms Serving						
3-Year-Olds	181	0.05	0.11	173	0.09	0.20
4-Year-Olds	181	0.22	0.36	173	0.10	0.23
Mixed-Age 3- and 4-Year-Olds	181	0.50	0.39	173	0.40	0.47
	Number of PA PKC Children			**Number of Non-PA PKC Children**		
	n	**Mean**	**(SD)**	**n**	**Mean**	**(SD)**
Total Children by Age						
Infants/Toddlers (birth to under 3-years-old)	—	—	—	167	28.1	50.6
3-Year-Olds	171	28.0	49.2	166	31.1	76.6
4-Year-Olds	173	60.3	79.9	168	40.2	92.9
Proportion in PA PKC by Age						
3-year-olds	145	0.64	0.33	—	—	—
4-year-olds	170	0.74	0.26	—	—	—

Table 6. Proportion of 3-year-olds Enrolled in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts (Administrator Level)

	PA PKC Administrators (n=167)	
Proportion 3-year-olds	**n**	**%**
0-25%	56	33.5
26-50%	99	59.3
51-75%	11	6.6
76-100%	1	0.6

Figure 1. Distribution of Percentage of 3-Year-Olds Enrolled in PA PKC by Number of Administrators (Administrator Survey)

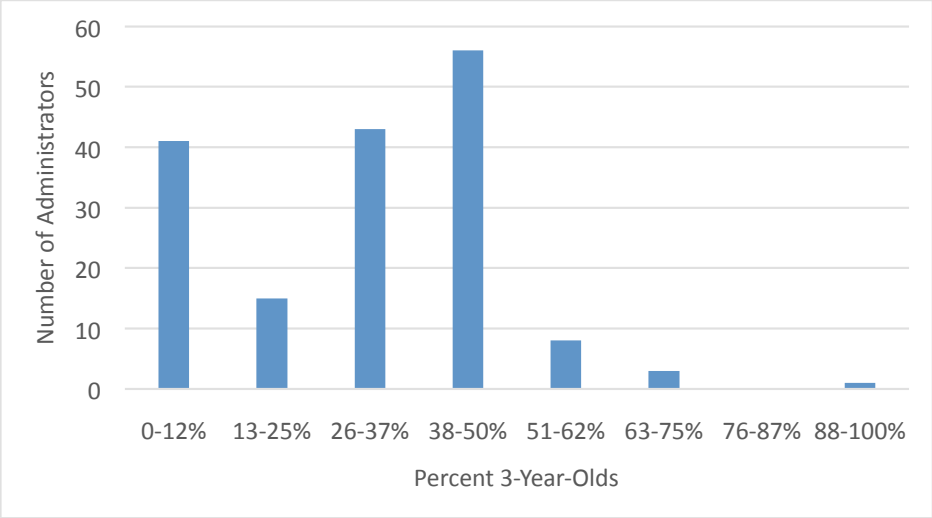


Table 7. Provider Type for Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Programs in Implementation Study Sample

Provider Type[3] (n=554)	%	n
Head Start Grantee	36.3	201
Child Care Center	32.1	178
School District	28.3	157
Private Licensed Nursery School	3.2	18

§ 405.44. Staffing and Professional Development

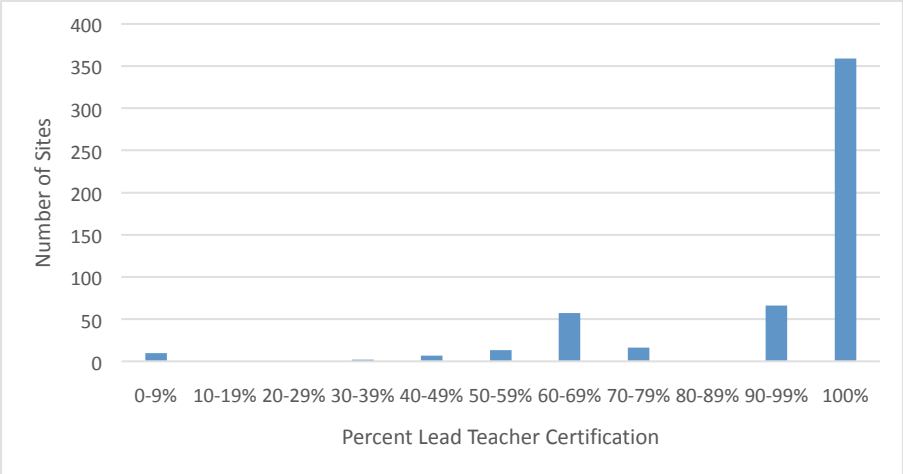
Table 8. Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Programs Meeting Lead Teacher Certification Standards (Site Level Administrative Data)

§ 405.44. Staffing and Professional Development[4]		
All Lead Teachers Meet Certification Standards	n	%
No	174	32.6
Yes	359	67.4

[3] These results are reported at the site level based on PELICAN data. Data were missing for 9 programs.

[4] These results are reported at the site level based on PELICAN data. Sites were categorized into two groups (0-99% vs 100%) based on the percentage of lead teachers meeting PA PKC instructional certification criteria (Instructional Level I or higher).

FIGURE 2. DISTRIBUTION OF PROPORTION OF PA PKC LEAD TEACHERS MEETING CERTIFICATION STANDARD BY NUMBER OF SITES (SITE LEVEL ADMINISTRATIVE DATA)



Variability in Implementation

§ 405.21. TARGETING CHILDREN TO BE SERVED/§ 405.24. ENROLLMENT

TABLE 9. HIGHEST PRIORITY FACTORS FOR ENROLLMENT IN PENNSYLVANIA PRE-K COUNTS (2018-2019)

Highest Priority Enrollment Factors	PA PKC Administrators n=179	
	%	n
§ 405.21. Targeting children to be served; § 405.24. Enrollment		
Homelessness	65.9	118
4-Year-Olds	64.2	115
IEP	61.5	110
English Language Learner	55.9	100
Teen Mother	55.9	100
Incarcerated Parent	55.3	99
Child/Family Receiving Protective Services	53.6	96
Child Receiving Behavioral Supports	46.9	84
Education Level of Parent/Guardian	42.5	76
Children Residing in Your School District	41.3	74
Migrant Seasonal Student	22.3	40
All Factors Weighed the Same	4.5	8
Other[5]	10.6	19

[5]Other enrollment priority factors (up to 3 per Administrator) included being in foster care or being raised by a nonbiological parent (n=6); having siblings who were in the program (n=4); children enrolled in the childcare program (n=3); living with a single parent (n=2); families on the CCIS wait list (n=2); and (all n=1) having a deceased parent, being in a family with more than 4 children, having a military parent, speech, Early Head Start transitions, documented special needs of the parent/caregiver, the child has never received any ECE services, a family member is receiving SSI/TANF, and one point is given to each factor with a priority given to the highest scores.

§ 405.21. Targeting children to be served/§ 405.24. Enrollment

Table 10. Methods Used to Distribute Information about Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts (2018-2019)

Method of Information Distribution	PA PKC Administrators n=184	
	%	n
§ 405.21. Targeting children to be served; § 405.24. Enrollment		
Program Website	83.2	153
Posting Flyers	81.5	150
Social Media	79.9	147
Local Elementary Schools	71.2	131
Open House Meetings	70.7	130
Online Advertising	66.3	122
Other Early Education Programs	56.0	103
Signage	48.9	90
Newspaper Ads	42.9	79
Radio Spots	18.5	34
Magazine Ads	8.7	16
Other[6]	12.0	22

[6]Other sources (up to 3 per Administrator) included community events, agencies, providers, nonprofit organizations, and businesses (n=32); direct mailing based on census data (n=2); door-to-door recruitment (n=2); recruitment through current parents (n=2); and (all n=1) word of mouth, wrapping agency cars, children's team meetings, and sending home letters/flyers to in-house parents

§ 405.21. Targeting children to be served/§ 405.24. Enrollment

Table 11. Languages of Recruitment Materials for Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts (2018–2019)

Languages of Recruitment Materials	PA PKC Administrators n=183	
	%	n
§ 405.21. Targeting children to be served; § 405.24. Enrollment		
Only English	47.0	86
Spanish	50.8	93
Arabic	5.5	10
Nepali	3.8	7
Chinese	3.3	6
Vietnamese	1.1	2
Hebrew	1.1	2
Russian	1.1	2
Somali	0.5	1
Ukrainian	0.5	1
As Needed	3.3	6

§ 405.21. Targeting children to be served; § 405.24. Enrollment

Table 12. First Languages of Children (non-English) Within Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts (2018-2019)

	Percent of Programs with Children Who Speak Languages Other Than English n=177		Average Number of PA PKC Children Who Speak This Language			Average Number of Classrooms with a Teacher or Aide Who Speaks the Child's Language		
	%	n	Mean	(SD)	n	Mean	(SD)	n
§ 405.21. Targeting children to be served; § 405.24. Enrollment								
Program Has Children Who Speak a Language Other than English	49.7	88	–	–	–	–	–	–
Spanish	40.7	72	15.8	30.3	66	1.8	3.4	64
Arabic	17.5	31	6.0	6.2	28	0.4	1.0	27
Chinese	13.0	23	2.9	3.1	20	0.3	0.8	20
Nepali	6.8	12	9.7	10.6	9	0.3	0.7	9
Vietnamese	6.2	11	1.4	0.5	10	0.3	0.7	10
Russian	3.4	6	3.8	3.1	6	0.6	0.9	5
Other[7]	13.6	24	5.1	8.2	23	0.6	1.0	23
Program Has Goals for DLL Children[8]	44.3	77	–	–	–	–	–	–

[7]Other languages included African Dialects (n=1), Albanian (n=1), Amharic (n=1), Berber (n=1), Burmese (n=1), French (n=2), French Creole (n=1), Greek (n=1), Gujarati (n=4), Guyanese (n=1), Hebrew (n=3), Japanese (n=1), Karen (n=1), Korean (n=3), Persian (n=1), Polish (n=1), Portuguese (n=1), Romanian (n=1), Swahili (n=1), Somali (n=2), Thai (n=1), Turkish (n=4), Ukrainian (n=2), Urdu (n=3).
[8]Percentage for this item calculated using n=174.

§ 405.21. Targeting children to be served/§ 405.24. Enrollment/§ 405.31. Coordination and Collaboration

Table 13. Collaborations for Recruitment by Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts (2018–2019)

	PA PKC Administrators n=182	
Type of Agency Collaboration	**%**	**n**
§ 405.21. Targeting children to be served; § 405.24. Enrollment; § 405.31. Coordination and Collaboration		
School Systems	80.2	146
Head Start Programs	78.6	143
Child Care Programs	76.9	140
Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies	70.9	129
Family Resource Centers	48.9	89
Neighborhood and Community Centers	45.1	82
Pediatricians' Offices	40.7	74
Faith-Based Organizations	38.5	70
Public Health Centers	35.2	64
Developmental Evaluation Centers	31.3	57
Mental Health Centers	28.6	52
Housing Authority Agencies	26.9	49
Inter-Agency Councils	26.9	49
Parks and Recreation Centers	22.5	41
Domestic Violence Shelters	21.4	39
Ethnic/Cultural Organizations	20.3	37
Family Courts	12.1	22
Other[9]	15.4	28

[9]Other sources (up to 3 per Administrator) included local businesses (n=9); intermediate units (n=7); children, youth, and family services (n=4); early intervention providers (n=3); local community action groups/Salvation Army/United Way (n=3), libraries (n=4); food programs (n=3); early learning resource centers/family center (n=3); homeless shelters (n=2); DHS offices (n=2); CAP agencies (n=2); and (all n=1) advertisements in local paper/magazines, doctors and dentists, census data, intra-agency programs, Jewish Federation, mayor's office, local AEYC organization, migrant program, and private schools.

§ 405.31. Coordination and Collaboration with Agencies Providing Services to Young Children

Table 14. Formal Collaborations to Help Families by Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts (2018-2019)

Type of Formal Collaboration	PA PKC Administrators n=178	
§ 405.31. Coordination and Collaboration	**%[10]**	**n**
Program Has Formed Collaborations with Community Agencies that Can Help Families	64.0	114
Child Mental Health Screenings or Assessments	37.1	66
Dental Services	35.4	63
Food or Other Emergency Assistance	28.1	50
Mental Health Care Coordination or Therapy	25.8	46
Family Literacy Services	15.2	27
Education or Job Training	13.5	24
Housing Assistance	11.8	21
Employment Assistance	10.1	18
Linkages to Health, Job Training, and Other Community Services	9.6	17
Pediatrician Services	7.9	14
Services for Drug or Alcohol Abuse	7.9	14
Disability Services for Parents	7.3	13
Financial Assistance	7.3	13
Transportation Assistance	7.3	13
Special Activities for Parents of DLLs		
Activities and Workshops Taught in Spanish	6.2	11
English Language Classes for Parents	5.6	10
Legal Assistance	3.9	7
Adult Health Care	1.7	3
Prenatal Care/OB GYN	1.7	3
None	36.0	64

[10]Percentages were calculated using the total number of respondents (n=178), including those who indicated they had no formal collaborations with community agencies.

§ 405.51. Inclusive Environments

Table 15. Children with Disabilities Within Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts (2018–2019)

		PA PKC Administrators		
	Total n	%	n	Mean (SD)
§ 405.51. Inclusive Environments				
Program Conducts Screenings to Identify Children with Disabilities	176	97.2	172	
Program Has Children with Disabilities Enrolled	177	94.4	167	
Average Percentage of Enrolled Children with Disabilities	162			13.0 (7.7)

§ 405.31. Coordination and Collaboration with Agencies Providing Services to Young Children

Table 16. Services for Children with Disabilities within Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts (2018–2019)

	Program Provides Services n=177		Service Provided by Own Staff		Service Provided by Contracted Staff		Service Provided Inside Classroom		Service Provide Outside Classroom	
Program Offerings for Children with Disabilities	%	n[11]	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
§ 405.31. Coordination and Collaboration										
Speech/Language Therapy	81.9	145	9.0	13	92.4	134	89.0	129	43.4	63
Occupational Therapy	71.8	127	7.9	10	96.1	122	88.2	112	48.0	61
Physical Therapy	68.9	122	4.9	6	91.8	112	82.0	100	45.9	56
Psychological or Psychiatric Services	56.5	100	9.0	9	92.0	92	66.0	66	65.0	65
Nutrition Services	54.2	96	65.6	63	41.7	40	79.2	76	42.7	41
Nursing Services	44.6	79	48.1	38	54.4	43	64.6	51	58.2	46
Other	38.4	68	26.5	18	83.8	57	86.8	59	36.8	25

[11]Percentages in the subsequent columns are calculated based on the corresponding row n in the 'Program Provides Services' column

§ 405.45. Curriculum

Pennsylvania's Pre-Kindergarten Early Learning Standards

Table 17. Curricula Used by Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts (2018–2019)

Curriculum	PA PKC Administrators	
§ 405.45. Curriculum/Early Learning Standards	**%**	**n**
Primary Curriculum[12]		182
Teaching Strategies Creative Curriculum for Preschool[13]	70.3	128
HighScope	7.1	13
Scholastic Big Day for PreK	7.1	13
Pearson – Open the World to Learning (OWL)	5.5	10
McGraw Hill World of Wonders	3.8	7
Starfall PreK	3.3	6
Early Learning Success, LLC	2.2	4
Kaplan Connect4Learning	2.2	4
Kaplan Learn Every Day	2.2	4
Frog Street Pre-K	1.6	3
Curiosity Corner	1.1	2
Funshine Express – Fireflies	1.1	2
Investigator Club	1.1	2
Mother Goose Time	1.1	2
DIG Develop Inspire Grow	0.5	1
Voyager Sopris Learning – We Can Early Learning Curriculum	0.5	1
Other[14]	12.1	22
Domain Specific Curriculum[15]		177
Do Not Use Domain Specific Curricula	55.4	98
I Can Problem Solve (PK) - Approaches to Learning through Play	4.0	7
ABCs for Me! – Social and Emotional Development	2.8	5
Blueprint for Early Literacy (PK)	2.3	4
Learning A-Z	1.7	3
Carrie Flower – Social and Emotional Development	0.6	1
GrapeSEED – Language and Literacy	0.6	1
ORIGO Stepping Stones PK	0.6	1
Other[16]	35.2	64

[12]Administrators could indicate all primary curricula that applied; 90.1% of administrators who responded reported at least 1 approved curriculum.
[13]For Creative Curriculum, most administrators reported using the 5th edition (n=121). Other responses included the 4th edition (n=1) and no edition specified (n=6).
[14]Other primary curricula specified by administrators included locally-developed curricula (n=4); Heggerty, Fundations, Paths (n=3); Everyday Mathematics, Houghton Mifflin, Letter People, Second Step (n=2); Early Foundations, Early Learning Network, Emergent, Eureka Math, Stepping Stones, Learning Without Tears, Positive Behavior Intervention Support, Splash Into Pre-K, I Can Problem Solve, Color Me Healthy, Incredible Years, I Am Moving I Am Learning, Handwriting Without Tears, World of Wonders (n=1).
[15]Administrators could indicate all domain specific curricula that applied; 10.7% of administrators who responded indicated at least 1 approved domain specific curricula.
[16]Other domain-specific curricula specified by administrators included Paths (n=20); Second Step (n=14); Conscious Discipline, Creative Curriculum (n=5); Incredible Years (n=3); Fundations, Learning Without Tears, OWL, Positive Behavior Intervention Support (n=2); Al's Pals, Choose Love, CLI – Blueprint, Excellerations, First Step, McGraw Hill World of Wonders, Reading Workshop, Scholastic, Waterford (n=1).

§ 405.46. Assessment
Pennsylvania's Pre-Kindergarten Early Learning Standards
Table 18. Child Assessments Used by Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts (2018-2019)

	PA PKC Administrators n=180	
§ 405.46. Assessment/Early Learning Standards	**%**	**n**
Frequency of Assessment		
Never	0.6	1
Once	3.3	6
Twice	18.9	34
Three or More Times	77.2	139
Assessment Tool		
Teaching Strategies GOLD	62.8	113
Pearson: The Work Sampling System	38.3	69
High Scope: COR Advantage	3.3	6
NIEER: Early Learning Scale	2.8	5
myIGDIs	0.6	1
Other[17]	15.0	27

[17]Other assessments specified by administrators included: Ages and Stages Questionnaire (n=12); Brigance, locally developed assessments, Preschool Early Literacy Indicators (n=2); authentic assessments/pre-kindergarten screening, Battelle, class T-Pot, curriculum assessments, Infant-Kindergarten (0-5 Years), Life Steps, Handwriting, Owl Hill Learning Center Development Checklists & Pearson Ounce, Scholastic Early Childhood Inventory, teacher observations (n=1). Note that the Ages and Stages Questionnaire was an approved screening tool.

§ 405.47. Parent Involvement
Pennsylvania's Pre-Kindergarten Early Learning Standards: Partnerships for Learning
Table 19. Parent Views of Relationships and Satisfaction with Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts

	Pre-K Sample			Kindergarten Sample			
	PA PKC n=3431			Former PA PKC n=247			PA PKC vs Former PA PKC
PA PKC Relationships	**n**	**Mean**	**(SD)**	**n**	**Mean**	**(SD)**	**Effect Size**
§ 405.47. Parent Involvement/ Partnerships for Learning							
Relationships with PA PKC Staff[18]	2900	4.7	1.2	225	3.9	1.5	0.7
Support of Parent Goals by PA PKC Staff[19]	3003	3.0	1.0	230	2.6	1.1	0.4
Satisfaction with PA PKC Program[20]	3001	3.9	0.3	229	3.8	0.4	0.3

[18]Adapted from Green, McAllister, & Tarte (2007). Items scored from 1-6 (strongly disagree to strongly agree).
[19]Adapted from the Family-Provider/Teacher Relationship Quality Measure - Family Services Staff Parent Measure: Short Form. Items scored from 1–4 (never to very often).
[20]Items scored from 1-4 (very dissatisfied to very satisfied).

Table 20. Language Use by Families and Staff in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts (2018–2019)

	PA PKC Administrators n=181		
	n	% / Mean	(SD)
§ 405.47. Parent Involvement/Partnerships for Learning			
Percent of Programs with Families Who Speak Languages Other than English			
Total with Any Other Languages	100	55.2	
Spanish	83	45.9	—
Arabic	30	16.6	—
Chinese	27	14.9	—
Vietnamese	15	8.3	—
Russian	12	6.6	—
Nepali	11	6.1	—
Other[21]	24	13.3	—
Average Number of Families/Program Who Speak Languages Other than English			
Spanish	75	21.3	45.1
Arabic	25	7.6	9.1
Chinese	23	2.4	2.3
Vietnamese	12	1.8	1.2
Russian	11	3.1	2.8
Nepali	8	12.1	11.2
Other	23	6.4	10.3
Percent of Programs Needing Staff to Communicate with Families in Other Languages			
Spanish	44	24.3	—
Arabic	16	8.8	—
Chinese	9	5.0	—
Vietnamese	8	4.4	—
Russian	0	0.0	—
Nepali	1	3.9	—
Other	14	7.7	—
Percent of Programs with Staff Able to Communicate with Families in Other Languages			
Spanish	54	29.8	—
Arabic	0	0.0	—
Chinese	3	1.7	—
Vietnamese	2	1.1	—
Russian	0	0.0	—
Nepali	6	3.3	—
Other	6	3.3	—

[21]Other languages reported by administrators included African Dialects (n=2), Albanian (n=1), Berber (n=1), Bosnian (n=1), Burmese (n=1), French (n=2), French Creole (n=1), Greek (n=1), Gujarati (n=3), Guyanese (n=1), Hebrew (n=2), Italian (n=1); Korean (n=2), Persian (n=1), Polish (n=3), Portuguese (n=1), Somali (n=2), Swahili (n=2), Thai (n=1), Turkish (n=3), Twi (n=1), Ukrainian (n=1), Urdu (n=3).

§ 405.47. Parent Involvement

Pennsylvania's Pre-Kindergarten Early Learning Standards: Partnerships for Learning

Table 21. Parent Thoughts about School and Learning

	Pre-K Sample			Kindergarten Sample							
	PA PKC n=3431			Former PA PKC n=247			No ECE Comparison n=102			PA PKC vs Former PA PKC	Former PA PKC vs No ECE Comparison
School & Learning Topics	n	Mean	(SD)	n	Mean	(SD)	n	Mean	(SD)	Effect Size	Effect Size
§ 405.47. Parent Involvement/ Partnerships for Learning											
Confidence in Supporting Child's Learning[22]	3403	6.6	0.7	247	6.5	0.7	102	6.4	0.7	0.1	0.1
Thoughts about Success in School[23]	3195	4.6	0.4	241	4.6	0.4	100	4.6	0.4	0.0	0.0
Involvement in Child's School[24]	3268	5.9	1.2	244	5.4	1.3	101	5.2	1.5	0.4	0.1

[22]From the UW Road Map Family Engagement Survey. Items scored from 1–7 (not confident at all to extremely confident).

[23]Items scored from 1–5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree).

[24]From the UW Road Map Family Engagement Survey. Items scored from 1–7 (strongly disagree to strongly agree).

Table 22. Parent Views about Social Supports in Their Lives

	Pre-K Sample			Kindergarten Sample							
	PA PKC n=3431			Former PA PKC n=247			No ECE Comparison n=102			PA PKC vs Former PA PKC	Former PA PKC vs No ECE
Social Supports	n	Mean	(SD)	n	Mean	(SD)	n	Mean	(SD)	Effect Size	Effect Size
§ 405.47. Parent Involvement/ Partnerships for Learning											
Total Support[25]	3086	3.6	0.9	237	3.3	0.9	97	3.3	1.0	0.3	0.0
Professional Services	2980	3.9	1.0	231	3.6	1.1	92	3.4	1.2	0.3	0.2
Informal/Social Support	3085	3.5	1.0	236	3.1	1.1	97	3.2	1.0	0.4	0.1
Kin	2985	3.7	1.2	229	3.5	1.2	94	3.4	1.3	0.2	0.1
Spouse/Partner and Their Relatives	2988	3.7	1.2	229	3.5	1.1	92	3.7	1.1	0.2	-0.2
Informal	3063	3.3	1.2	236	3.1	1.1	95	3.2	1.0	0.2	-0.1
Programs/Organizations	3013	3.5	1.1	229	3.2	1.2	85	2.8	1.2	0.3	0.3

[25]From the Family Support Scale (Dunst, Jenkins, & Trivette, 1984). Items scored from 1-5 (not at all helpful to extremely helpful).

§ 405.47. Parent Involvement

Pennsylvania's Pre-Kindergarten Early Learning Standards: Partnerships for Learning

Table 23. Family Engagement Offerings by Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts (2018–2019)

PA PKC Administrators	Total Respondents	Never		1-2 Times/ Year		Quarterly		Monthly		Weekly	
Type of Family Engagement	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**
§ 405.47. Parent Involvement/ Partnerships for Learning											
Child Education & Learning											
Information for parents about their child's growth and development	180	0.0	0	12.2	22	50.0	90	17.2	31	20.6	37
Information about the Early Learning Standards	180	3.9	7	50.0	90	17.8	32	9.4	17	18.9	34
Opportunities for parents and staff to jointly plan children's learning	180	7.2	13	43.9	79	33.9	61	9.4	17	5.6	10
Activities for parents and children focused on academics (literacy or math nights)	178	7.3	13	48.3	86	29.8	53	11.8	21	2.8	5
Field trips	178	14.6	26	51.1	91	24.2	43	10.1	18	0.0	0
Toy or book lending programs	178	29.8	53	14.6	26	6.2	11	14.0	25	35.4	63
Family / Adult Support											
Family-to-family support or networking opportunities	181	6.1	11	32.6	59	32.0	58	22.1	40	7.2	13
Workshops on parenting/parent training	180	12.8	23	42.8	77	26.1	47	16.7	30	1.7	3
Workshops on adult needs (employment, job training, financial counseling)	179	57.0	102	29.1	52	9.5	17	3.9	7	0.6	1
Program Decision-making											
Opportunities for parents to evaluate the program	179	3.2	6	83.3	150	11.1	20	1.1	2	1.1	2
Opportunities for parents to participate in policy and program decisions	178	32.0	57	41.0	73	10.1	18	16.9	30	0.0	0
Other activities	173	39.3	68	21.4	37	14.5	25	20.2	35	4.6	8

§ 405.48. Program Transition Planning
Pennsylvania's Pre-Kindergarten Early Learning Standards: Partnerships for Learning
Table 24. Transition Practices within Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts (2018–2019)

Transition Practice	PA PKC Administrators (n=179)	
§ 405.48. Program Transition Planning/ Partnerships for Learning	**% / Mean (SD)**	**n**
OCDEL Transition Best Practices Rubric and Transition Tool Kit[26]		
Used by PA PKC Program	62.1	110
Average rating of usefulness[27]	2.1 (1.1)	
Engagement of PA PKC Programs in Transition Activities		
Send/mail letters home to parents providing information on transition	99.4	178
Provide parents with information on the school their child will attend	93.9	168
Invite parents to attend informational meetings or discussions with program or school staff about kindergarten transition	90.5	162
Schedule parent and/or child visit(s) to the school child will attend	73.2	131
Teach parents skills to effectively advocate for their school-age children	65.4	117
Accompany parents and/or children to visit the school	60.9	109
Provide information to parents on available schools, so they can select the school-of-choice for their child	45.8	82
Other	46.9	84
PA PKC Programs Engagement with Kindergartens		
Share curriculum information	86.6	155
Provide children's program records to the school	86.0	154
Share information on expectations of students and families	84.4	151
Meet with kindergarten teachers at the school children will attend	82.1	147
Share information about rules and program policies	78.8	141
Help schools identify kindergarten students to enroll	78.2	140
Support and participate in community-wide transition team including parents and other community partners	68.7	123
Conduct joint training of program and school staff	66.5	119
Other	20.1	

[26]Percentages for this item were calculated using n=177.

[27]Mean (SD) was calculated for this item. The scale was scored from 0=not at all useful to 3=very useful.

§ 405.47. Program Transition Planning

Pennsylvania's Pre-Kindergarten Early Learning Standards: Partnerships for Learning

Table 25. Parent Participation in and Views about Kindergarten Transition Activities (2018–2019)

	Pre-K Sample			Kindergarten Sample							
	PA PKC n=3431			Former PA PKC n=247			No ECE Comparison n=102			PA PKC vs Former PA PKC	Former PA PKC vs No ECE
Transition Activities	**n**	**Mean**	**(SD)**	**n**	**Mean**	**(SD)**	**n**	**Mean**	**(SD)**	**Effect Size**	**Effect Size**
§ 405.48. Program Transition Planning/ Partnerships for Learning											
Preschool-Focused Transition Activities[28]											
Proportion of Activities Participated In	3020	0.5	0.4	237	0.7	0.4	92	0.2	0.3	-0.5	1.3
Proportion of Activities PA PKC Helped With	1921	0.9	0.3	189	0.9	0.3	—	—	—	0.0	—
Kindergarten-Focused Transition Activities											
Proportion of Activities Participated In	3015	0.5	0.4	238	0.8	0.2	92	0.6	0.3	-0.8	0.9
Proportion of Activities PA PKC Helped With	2399	0.7	0.4	235	0.8	0.4	—	—	—	-0.3	—

[28]Items scored 0/1 (Yes/No). The mean proportion represents the proportion of "Yes" responses averaged across respondents within that group.

Table 26. Perceptions of the Work Environment by Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Administrators (2018–2019)

	PA PKC Administrators (n=174)	
Work Environment	**Mean[29]**	**(SD)**
I really enjoy my present job.	4.5	0.7
I am certain I am making a difference in the lives of children.	4.7	0.5
If I could start over, I would choose education again as my career.	4.2	1.0
Staff is friendly and trusts one another.	4.4	0.7
Morale is high. There is a good team spirit.	4.1	0.9
Teachers help make decisions about things that directly affect them.	4.3	0.8
People feel free to express their opinions.	4.4	0.7
Supervisor(s) provides helpful feedback.	4.4	0.7

Table 27. Supports for Implementing Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts (2018–2019)

	PA PKC Administrators (n=175)	
Supports	**Mean[30]**	**(SD)**
The Preschool Program Specialist for my region helps me navigate resources and supports for providing high-quality early education.	4.3	0.9
Information provided by the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) on Pre-K Counts regulations is clear.	4.1	0.9
The infrastructure of my program (e.g., fiscal reporting, human resources, data systems) has been adequate to support the implementation of Pre-K Counts.	4.3	0.9
I have had sufficient technical assistance in implementing Pre-K Counts.	4.2	0.9

[29]The scale for these items was scored from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree.
[30]The scale for these items was scored from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree.

§ 405.44. Staffing and Professional Development; § 405.64. Teacher Induction Plans and Evaluations

Table 28. Certification and Training of Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Program Staff (2018–2019)

§ 405.44. Staffing and Professional Development; § 405.64. Teacher Induction Plans and Evaluations	Teachers			Aides			Home Visitors/Family Support Specialists			Coaches/Education Directors/Curriculum Specialists/Master Teachers		
	n	Mean	(SD)	n	Mean	(SD)	n	Mean	(SD)	n	Mean	(SD)
Number of Staff	173	5.55	6.86	172	6.24	7.35	164	0.53	1.47	166	1.65	2.04
Proportion of Staff												
Worked with Preschoolers for Less Than 3 Years	170	0.21	0.31	170	0.27	0.34	161	0.04	0.18	159	0.10	0.29
BA or Higher	170	0.97	0.13	167	0.25	0.32	163	0.15	0.34	162	0.64	0.47
Associates Degree (Not a BA)	167	0.02	0.09	169	0.34	0.37	162	0.02	0.09	159	0.04	0.18
Child Development Associates (CDA) Certificate	165	0.03	0.14	169	0.32	0.36	161	0.03	0.15	158	0.00	0.03
Instructional Level I Certification	169	0.59	0.36	164	0.07	0.20	162	0.02	0.12	160	0.18	0.34
Instructional Level II Certification	169	0.43	0.37	163	0.02	0.12	162	0.01	0.09	161	0.23	0.39
PK-4 Certification	170	0.85	0.32	164	0.07	0.18	162	0.02	0.12	160	0.22	0.36
Training Related to Children with Disabilities	166	0.36	0.42	164	0.18	0.35	162	0.04	0.18	162	0.26	0.40
Bilingual	167	0.04	0.14	164	0.08	0.21	162	0.03	0.14	160	0.02	0.12
Individual Career/ Professional Development Plans	170	0.82	0.38	170	0.73	0.43	163	0.15	0.35	160	0.54	0.50

§ 405.44. Staffing and Professional Development; § 405.64. Teacher Induction Plans and Evaluations

Table 29. Mentoring Activities for Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Teachers (2018–2019)

§ 405.44. Staffing and Professional Development; § 405.64. Teacher Induction Plans and Evaluations	PA PKC Administrators n=174	
	%	n
Program Has Mentors for PA PKC Teachers	79.3	138
How Often Teachers Receive Mentor/Coach or Peer Observation and Feedback		
Never	21.8	38
Once a Year	4.0	7
Twice a Year	21.8	38
3 Times a Year	6.9	12
4 Times a Year	12.1	21
Monthly or More	33.3	58
Peer Mentors Come From		
No Mentor	20.7	36
Within the Program	55.7	97
From an Outside Agency	23.6	41
How Often Mentor Teachers Come to the Classroom		
Never	20.7	36
Less than Once a Month	32.2	56
Once a Month	27.6	48
Once Every Two Weeks	7.5	13
Once a Week	12.1	21

§ 405.61. Program Reporting

Table 30. Systems Used by Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts to Track Data (2018–2019)

PA PKC Administrators (n=177)

	PELICAN		Other System		Not Tracked	
Information Tracked	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**
§ 405.61. Program Reporting						
Demographic Characteristics of Individual Children	62.1	110	32.2	57	5.6	10
Demographic Characteristics of Families	57.6	102	34.5	61	7.9	14
Attendance	55.4	98	44.6	79	0.0	0
Enrollment/Waitlists	27.1	48	71.2	126	1.7	3
Individual Child's Developmental Progress	11.9	21	87.0	154	1.1	2
Child's Health/Immunization Status	6.2	11	92.7	164	1.1	2
Staff Qualifications and Demographics	58.2	103	41.2	73	0.6	1
Staff Training/In-Service	11.9	21	87.6	155	0.6	1
Other[31]	2.0	3	8.1	12	89.9	134

[31]Percentages for this item were calculated using n=149.

§ 405.61. Program Reporting

Table 31. Data Updates and Use by Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts (2018–2019)

PA PKC Administrators (n=177)

Type of Data[32]	Never		Weekly		Monthly		Quarterly		Annually		Other	
§ 405.61. Program Reporting	**%**	**n**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**
Frequency of Updates												
Demographic Characteristics of Individual Children	8.5	15	9.0	16	13.6	24	9.6	17	40.1	71	19.2	34
Demographic Characteristics of Families	10.7	19	7.9	14	15.3	27	7.3	13	39.5	70	19.2	34
Attendance	1.1	2	25.4	45	47.5	84	0.6	1	0.0	0	25.4	45
Enrollment/Waitlists	3.4	6	36.7	65	26.6	47	6.8	12	2.3	4	24.3	43
Individual Child's Developmental Progress	2.8	5	22.6	40	16.4	29	47.5	84	1.1	2	9.6	17
Child's Health/Immunization Status	3.4	6	16.4	29	25.4	45	8.5	15	27.1	48	19.2	34
Staff Qualifications and Demographics	2.8	5	5.1	9	14.1	25	18.6	33	44.6	79	14.7	26
Staff Training/In-Service	2.3	4	5.1	9	28.8	51	32.2	57	15.3	27	16.4	29
Other	93.2	165	1.7	3	1.7	3	0.0	0	0.0	0	3.4	6
Frequency of Use												
Demographic Characteristics of Individual Children	15.8	28	9.0	16	15.3	27	13.0	23	37.9	67	9.0	16
Demographic Characteristics of Families	17.5	31	6.8	12	13.0	23	14.1	25	40.7	72	7.9	14
Attendance	2.8	5	32.2	57	50.3	89	2.3	4	1.7	3	10.7	19
Enrollment/Waitlists	10.7	19	22.6	40	27.1	48	9.6	17	4.0	7	26.0	46
Individual Child's Developmental Progress	3.4	6	28.8	51	19.2	34	39.5	70	1.7	3	7.3	13
Child's Health/Immunization Status	6.8	12	12.4	22	34.5	61	8.5	15	27.7	49	10.2	18
Staff Qualifications and Demographics	9.6	17	3.4	6	12.4	22	20.9	37	46.3	82	7.3	13
Staff Training/In-Service	7.9	14	4.5	8	32.2	57	27.1	48	22.0	39	6.2	11
Other	93.2	165	0.6	1	4.5	8	0.0	0	1.1	2	0.6	1

[32]For these items, any missing responses were categorized as 'never' based on the highest total n.

TABLE 32. IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES FOR PENNSYLVANIA PRE-K COUNTS PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS (2018–2019)

	PA PKC Administrators (n=175)		
Type of Challenge	**n**	**Mean[33]**	**(SD)**
Dealing with a challenging population	175	2.1	0.7
Time constraints (not enough hours in the day)	175	2.0	0.7
Too many conflicting demands	175	2.0	0.7
Lack of support staff	175	1.8	0.8
Staff turnover	175	1.8	0.8
Lack of parent support	175	1.7	0.7
Not a high enough salary for the job demands	175	1.7	0.8
Not enough funds for supplies and activities	175	1.6	0.7
Lack of qualified teaching staff	174	1.6	0.8
Not enough training and technical assistance for professional development	175	1.4	0.6
Not enough support and communication from administration	175	1.3	0.6
Other	142	1.2	0.5

Overall Level of Challenges[34]	**n**	**%**
Lower	123	70.3
High	52	29.7

[33] The scale for these items was scored from 1=not at all to 3=great deal harder.

[34] For this item, the Total Mean Challenges rating was calculated for each respondent. Total<2.0=Lower and Total≥2.0=High.

Figure 3. Distribution of Total Mean Implementation Challenges by Number of Administrators (Administrator Survey)

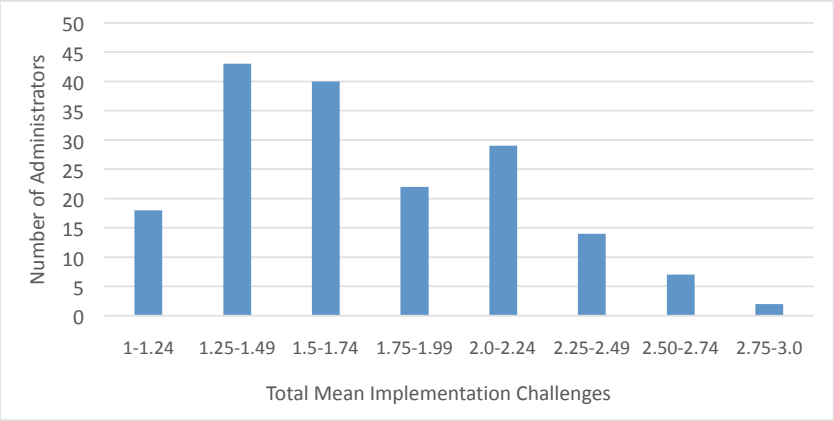


Table 33. Implementation Challenges by Program Characteristics – Region, Urbanicity, Program Size, Proportion 3-year-olds (Administrator Level)

Program Characteristic	Lower Challenges		High Challenges		Total	Chi-square
	n	%	n	%	n	p
Region	121		51		172	ns
NC	11	91.7	1	8.3	12	
NE	19	67.9	9	32.1	28	
NW	19	79.2	5	20.8	24	
SC	18	69.2	8	30.8	26	
SE	23	63.9	13	36.1	36	
SW	31	67.4	15	32.6	46	
Urbanicity	121		51		172	ns
Rural	61	74.4	21	25.6	82	
Urban	60	66.7	30	33.3	90	
Program Size	122		52		174	ns
Small	56	70.0	24	30.0	80	
Moderate	38	74.5	13	25.5	51	
Large	28	65.1	15	34.9	43	
Proportion 3-year-olds	115		44		159	.03
0–25%	42	79.2	11	20.8	53	
26–50%	68	72.3	26	27.7	94	
51–100%	5	41.7	7	58.3	12	

Table 34. Implementation Challenges by Program Characteristics – Provider Type & Teacher Certifications (Site Level Administrative Data)

	Lower Challenges		High Challenges		Total	Chi-square
	n	%	n	%	n	p
Provider Type	354		149		503	<.001
Head Start	106	59.2	73	40.8	179	
Child Care	97	62.6	58	37.4	155	
School District	139	92.1	12	7.9	151	
Private Licensed Nursery	12	66.7	6	33.3	18	
Meet Teacher Certification[35]	342		143		485	ns
No	94	71.2	38	28.8	132	
Yes	248	70.3	105	29.7	353	

[35]Note: Sites were categorized into two groups (0-99% vs 100%) based on the percentage of lead teachers meeting PA PKC instructional certification criteria (Instructional Level I or higher).

Appendix: Summary of Pre-K Counts Program Regulations and Early Learning Standard Areas Related to Implementation Study Measures

Summary of Pre-K Counts Program Regulations (Supplemental Resources noted with #)

For the complete PA PKC program regulations, see Pennsylvania Department of Education (2018). *Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Statute, Regulations and Guidelines.* Harrisburg, PA: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Education. Available Online: https://www.pakeys.org/wp-content/uploads/articulate_uploads/Pennsylvania-Pre-K-Counts-Request-for-Application-Information10/story_content/external_files/ADA_2018PKC-Regulations-and-Guidance.pdf

§ 405.21. Targeting children to be served. Eligible Children: Age and income are the two primary eligibility requirements that all children must meet in order to be considered for enrollment in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts. Eligible 3- and 4-year-olds who reside in a low-income household and are at risk of educational failure because of limited English proficiency, poverty, community factors, academic difficulties or economic disadvantage may be enrolled in the program. A selection and prioritization strategy must be developed that first looks at 300 percent or below of income, then other risk factors such as homelessness, teen mother or English language learner. Children with disabilities may receive at-risk prioritization in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts as part of a provider's enrollment strategies if the child meets all eligibility requirements. Attendance monitoring and requirements also included in this section.

> **#004: Additional Risk Factor Guidance.** Family income that is 300 percent or below the federal poverty guideline is the primary eligibility factor required for a child's participation in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts. Enrollment for children should be prioritized by developing a selection process to consider additional risk factors. Each program, based on their community needs should consider prioritizing enrollments for: child receiving behavioral supports, child or family who receives protective services, English language learner, homeless, preschooler with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), migrant (non-immigrant) seasonal student, or has a teen mother.

§ 405.24. Enrollment. Each provider shall develop and implement a plan for securing full enrollment throughout the program year. Outreach efforts throughout the community to locate and enroll children whose families are at 300 percent or below the federal poverty guidelines are an ongoing requirement. Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts programs may be able to reduce the waiting lists in the county Head Start program or Child Care Works subsidy programs by establishing a system of reciprocal referrals. A selection and prioritization strategy must be developed that first looks at 300 percent or below of income, then other risk factors such as homelessness, teen mother or English language learner. Children with disabilities may receive at-risk prioritizations in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts as part of a provider's enrollment strategies if the child meet all eligibility requirements; services may not be denied based on disability.

§ 405.31. Coordination and Collaboration with Agencies Providing Services to Young Children. Community Outreach and Early Intervention. Approved providers shall coordinate and collaborate with the local agencies providing Early Intervention services, the Child Care Information Services agency in their area, programs that provide the before and after Program, child care for participating children, Head Start agencies, school districts in those areas from which they are enrolling children in the Program, the local community groups that engage the public in issues related to early childhood education, and other Program sites in their county on activities such as professional development, family outreach and child enrollment strategies, to the extent practicable to the advantage of all of the Programs and creation of greater efficiencies. Children receiving supports and services from local Early Intervention programs shall receive services in the same learning environments as same age peers.

§ 405.44. Staffing and Professional Development. Lead teachers in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts classrooms shall meet the education certification requirements at the start of the school year based on provider type (school district, community-based). Lead teachers shall convert Instructional Level I certificates to Instructional Level II within 6 years. A teacher aide is required in all classrooms that exceed 10 students, and aides must meet certification criteria (e.g., associate's degree of higher, CDA certificate). Effective recruitment and retention, consistent staffing, and comparable salaries for community and

school-based teaching staff to the extent possible are noted for obtaining and maintaining high quality. Professional development necessary for educational certifications and other required trainings must be provided for teachers and aides.

§ 405.45. Curriculum. (a) The curriculum used in any classroom that includes a child who is enrolled in the Program must be standards-based. (b) The curriculum used in the Program must be determined by the Department to be aligned with the Early Learning Standards established by the Department.

§ 405.46. Assessment. Approved providers shall: (1) Assess eligible students with a minimum frequency determined by the Department using an assessment tool approved by the Department. (2) Participate in Department conducted training in the use of the assessment tool as prescribed by the Department. (3) Report aggregate assessment information to the Department for purposes of Program monitoring, evaluation, reporting child outcomes and accountability in a manner and with a frequency and schedule determined by the Department. (4) Participate in a Department conducted assessment of the Program learning environment and attend the training in the use of the environmental self-assessment tool as prescribed by the Department. Continuous Quality Improvement: Results of the environmental assessment must be used by the program to determine program needs as part of a continuous quality improvement plan.

§ 405.47. Parent Involvement. Approved providers shall develop and implement a plan for involvement and input of parents, families and guardians of children enrolled in the program to inform them of program goals, instructional strategies, and the progress of their children and to involve them in supportive activities designed to help ensure their child's success.

§ 405.48. Program Transition Planning. (a) Approved providers shall develop and implement plans designed to ensure a smooth and supportive transition for children entering the program from the setting from which they are coming, including the home, Early Intervention services, Early Head Start or child care. (b) Approved providers shall develop and implement plans to ensure a smooth and supportive transition for children leaving the Program to enter kindergarten and the K-12 school environment.

§ 405.51. Inclusive Environments. A Program classroom should reflect the naturally occurring ratio of students with and without developmental delays and disabilities in the area served by the approved provider and should not contain more than 20 percent of students who have been identified by the start of the program year as having a developmental delay or disability. However, in attempting to promote inclusion in this way, approved providers may not deny students admission to a classroom based on their disability or delay. Coordination with Early Intervention system required.

§ 405.61. Program Reporting. Approved providers shall provide reports as requested by the Department and in the manner and at times as prescribed by the Department, including, but not limited to, expenditure reports, reconciliation of cash reports, enrollment, attendance, demographic information and child outcomes.

> **#014: Reporting and Data Requirements.** Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts providers must submit documentation of program implementation through multiple sources: Early Learning Network, Financial Accounting Information System (FAI system), and submission of written program plans.
>
> **#015: Continuous Quality Improvement/Best Practices.** Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Programs must develop and implement a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan. It is an ongoing process by which an organization makes decisions and evaluates its progress. Continuous Quality Improvement Planning for Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts must include staff, families, children and stakeholders at all levels.

§ 405.64. Teacher Induction Plans and Evaluations. Approved providers shall facilitate activities that teachers must undertake to advance their certification from Instructional Level I to Instructional Level II.

Pennsylvania Pre-Kindergarten Early Learning Standard Areas

For the complete Early Learning Standards, see Office of Child Development and Early Learning (2014). *Pennsylvania Learning Standards for Early Childhood Pre-Kindergarten.* Harrisburg, PA: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Education. Available Online: https://www.pakeys.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/2014-Pennsylvania-Learning-Standards-for-Early-Childhood-PreKindergarten.pdf

Approaches to Learning through Play: AL.1: Constructing and Gathering Knowledge, AL.2: Organizing and Understanding Information, AL.3: Applying Knowledge, AL.4: Learning through Experience

Language and Literacy Developm ent – English Language Arts: 1.1: Foundational Skills, 1.2: Reading Informational Text, 1.3: Reading Literature, 1.4: Writing, 1.5: Speaking and Listening

Mathematical Thinking and Expression: 2.1: Numbers and Operations, 2.2: Algebraic Concepts, 2.3: Geometry, 2.3: Measurement, Data, and Probability

Scientific Thinking and Technology: 3.1A-C: Biological Sciences – Living and Non-Living Organisms, Genetics, & Evolution; 3.2A-B: Physical Sciences – Chemistry & Physics; 3.3A-B: Earth and Space Sciences – Earth Structures, Processes, and Cycles; Origin and Evolution of the Universe; 4.1-4.5: Environment and Ecology – Ecology, Watersheds and Wetlands, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Society; Humans and the Environment; 15.4: Computer and Information Technology

Social Studies Thinking: 5.1-5.3: Civics and Government – Principles and Documents of Government, Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship, How Government Works; 6.1-6.3, 6.5 – Scarcity and Choice; Markets and Economic Systems; Functions of Government; and Income, Profit, and Wealth; 7.1-7.2: Geography – Basic Geographic Literacy, Physical Characteristics of Places and Regions; 8.1: History – Historical Analysis and Skills Development

Creative Thinking and Expression: 9.1M, D, V: Production and Performance – Music and Movement, Dramatic and Performance Play, Visual Arts; 9.2: Historical and Cultural Context of Works in the Arts; 9.3: Critical Response to Works in the Arts; 9.4: Aesthetic Response to Works in the Arts

Health, Wellness, and Physical Development: 10.1: Concepts of Health; 10.2: Healthful Living; 10.3: Safety and Injury Prevention; 10.4: Physical Activity – Gross Motor Coordination; 10.5: Concepts, Principles, and Strategies of Movement – Fine Motor Coordination

Social and Emotional Development: 16.1: Self-Awareness and Self-Management, 16.2: Establishing and Maintaining Relationships, 16.3: Decision-Making and Responsible Behavior

Partnerships for Learning–––Families, Early Care and Education Programs, and Communities: PL.1: Families are supported in times of need; PL.2: Families experience relationships with early care and education programs that are affirming, reciprocal, and build upon their strengths; PL.3: Families have the support and information they need to encourage their children's learning and development; PL.4: Family members have support from other families; PL.5: Family have goals of their own and benefit from having supportive partners to help reach their goals; PL.6: Families grow in their leadership and use these skills in many different ways; PL.7: Families are supported in times of transition

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[i]Pennsylvania Department of Education. (2017). *Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Statute, Regulations and Guidelines.* Harrisburg, PA: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Education.

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[iii]Friedman-Krauss, A. H., Barnett, W. S., Garver, K. A., Hodges, K. S., Weisenfeld, G. G. & DiCrecchio, N. (2019). *The State of Preschool 2018: State Preschool Yearbook.* New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research. Available Online: http://nieer.org/state-preschool-yearbooks/2018-2#profiles

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[vi]Peisner-Feinberg, E., Soliday Hong, S., Yazejian, N., Zadrozny, S., & Burchinal, M. (2020). *Kindergarten Impacts of the Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Program: A Statewide Evaluation.* Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina, School of Education and the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute.