

In the Child-Parent Center preschool to 3rd grade (CPC P-3) model, teaching and classroom practices provide continuous and intensive opportunities and experiences for engaged learning. Diverse instruction focuses on the development of language-literacy, math, science, and socio-emotional skills.

Why is effective learning important?

- It results in more engagement in the learning process,¹ which can affect achievement for years to come.
- Economic returns to the public and participants include cost savings in remedial education, child welfare, juvenile and adult justice system treatment, and public aid.^{2,3}
- There is a greater likelihood for college attendance and higher earnings in adulthood, including money saved for retirement.

“I differentiate with my students and separate them by their levels to keep them challenged and growing. In science, I have resource centers with science kits that the kids love. There are a lot of hands-on activities for the kids to do. Children can be more creative when they are engaged in child-directed activities and can explore and ask questions.”

— Tamika Wells
Preschool Teacher

Effective learning experiences in CPC P-3

- Preschool classes are limited to 17 children and have a minimum of two teaching staff. Kindergarten through 3rd grade classes are limited to 25 children and have a minimum of two teaching staff.
- Head Teachers and classroom teachers are certified teachers with a bachelor’s degree (or higher). All assistants have an associate’s degree, 60 credit hours, or a CDA.



- A variety of instructional strategies and practices are used to allow for an instructional balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities.
- Teachers document the organization and implementation of instructional activities at least quarterly.
- Teachers meet with parents several times throughout the year to review children’s progress and discuss parent program opportunities with the Parent Resource Teacher.

Engaged learning in the classroom

Evidence from the CPC P-3 expansion supports the benefits of small classes on student engagement. Of CPC P-3 classrooms that were observed from preschool to 1st grade, 86 percent were rated high on engagement and task orientation compared with 53 percent of classrooms in comparison schools.

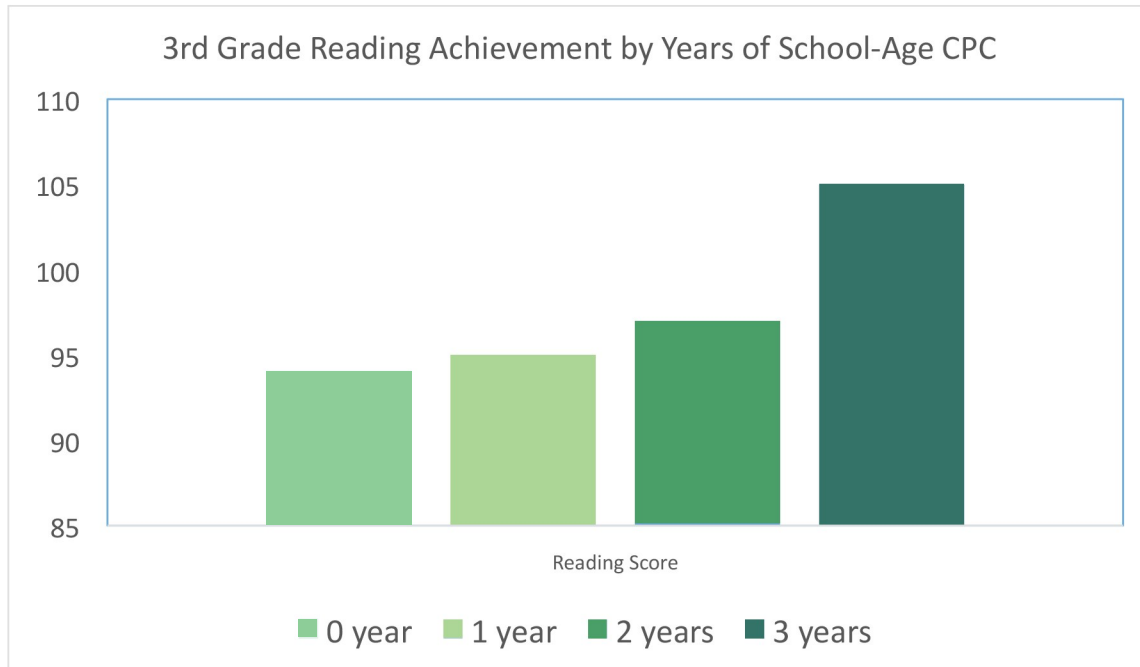
It has also been found that students in highly engaged classrooms experienced greater gains in learning in preschool compared with students in less-engaged classrooms. Greater percentages of instruction time in child-initiated literacy activities also were associated with larger preschool learning gains. A balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated instruction is most recommended, however.

Implementing effective learning experiences

To monitor the effectiveness of learning experiences in the classroom, centers and schools use their own formative assessments, although CPC P-3 may recommend tools to supplement those already in place or suggest those that have strong evidence of validity.

The school's curriculum alignment plan documents the alignment and use of assessments across grades in meeting performance bench-

marks. Analyses of child assessment data are of key importance in informing and improving instruction as well as tailoring instructional practices to the needs of individual children. The fall assessment checkpoint, for example, provides an important opportunity to refine learning goals and strategies to address identified gaps in specific domains of school readiness skills, such as socio-emotional learning, oral language, and math.



Reading achievement improves as the number of years of CPC participation increases from 1st to 3rd grade. Scores are standard scores on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills for the Chicago study cohort. Each scale point is roughly equivalent to 1 month of performance. The 3-year group is 1 year ahead of the non-CPC group (0 years of participation).

References

- 1 Hamre, B. K., & Pianta, R. C. (2005). Can instructional and emotional support in the first-grade classroom make a difference for children at risk of school failure? *Child Development, 76*(5), 949–967.
- 2 Temple, J. A., & Reynolds, A. J. (2007). Benefits and costs of investments in preschool education: Evidence from the Child-Parent Centers and related programs. *Economics of Education Review, 26*(1), 126–144.
- 3 Rolnick, A. & Grunewald, R. (2003, December). Early childhood development: Economic development with a high public return. *The Region*. Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, pp. 6–12.
- 4 Chetty, R., Friedman, J. N., Hilger, N., Saez, E., Schanzenbach, D. W., & Yagan, D. (2011). How does your kindergarten classroom affect your earnings? Evidence from Project STAR. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 126*(4), 1593–1660.