

Give Colorado's Kids the Best Chance to Succeed in School

Program Name: **Colorado Preschool Program (CPP)**
Responsible State Agency: Department of Education, Early Childhood Initiatives
Goal: ***Maintain the 11,050 slots in CPP approved for FY02-03 so that as many children as possible will have the opportunity to succeed in school.***

Rationale:

- Closing the education achievement gap is a top priority for Colorado. Governor Owens, members of both parties in the legislature, and civic leaders across the state have all joined together to get the job done. CPP is a cornerstone of this effort.
- Studies show that at-risk children who participate in CPP have bridged the achievement gap:
 - On the 2000 third grade CSAP, CPP graduates, who have an average of 3.7 risk factors (e.g.—poverty, limited English proficiency), scored within two percentage points of the state average at the proficient and advanced levels.
 - In Weld County, more than half of the Hispanic CPP graduates scored at proficient or advanced levels on the 2000 third Grade CSAP, while only one third of the non-participating Hispanic students in the district scored as well.
- These children will only be four-years-old once. If we reduce the number of slots, they will never have this opportunity again.
- Not only does CPP provide a critical opportunity for at-risk children, it is also a cost effective investment for the state. National studies of the long-term impacts of high quality preschool programs estimate that there is a savings of \$7.16 in public spending for every dollar invested in these services.

Funding and Service History: CPP began in 1989 with 1,933 children and a budget of \$3.7 million and has grown to serve 11,050 children. The Colorado Department of Education estimates that at least 14,775 children are eligible for the program. Total funding for CPP is approximately \$31.6 million in FY02-03. Of this \$31.6 million, the state funds approximately 58% with the rest provided by local school districts.

**Colorado Preschool Program
History of Student Participation and Funding***

Year	# of Participants	Total Funding	Est. State Portion
1999-00	9,050	\$23.2	\$13.5
2000-01	9,029	\$22.9	\$13.3
2001-02	10,050	\$26.9	\$15.6
2002-03	11,050	\$31.6**	\$18.3**

* In millions of dollars

**This number must be estimated until the final Pupil Count is reported from the districts

- It should be noted that a reduction in the number of slots in this program will not yield equivalent savings in that fiscal year. CPP slots are funded as ½ of a full time student through the School Finance Act. Under that Act, districts can average their Pupil Count over the past 4 years in order to smooth out year-to-year changes in enrollment. This means that CPP slots funded over the past four years will continue to show up in district Pupil Counts for the current fiscal year.