

LA 4 Prekindergarten Program Evaluation 2002–2003

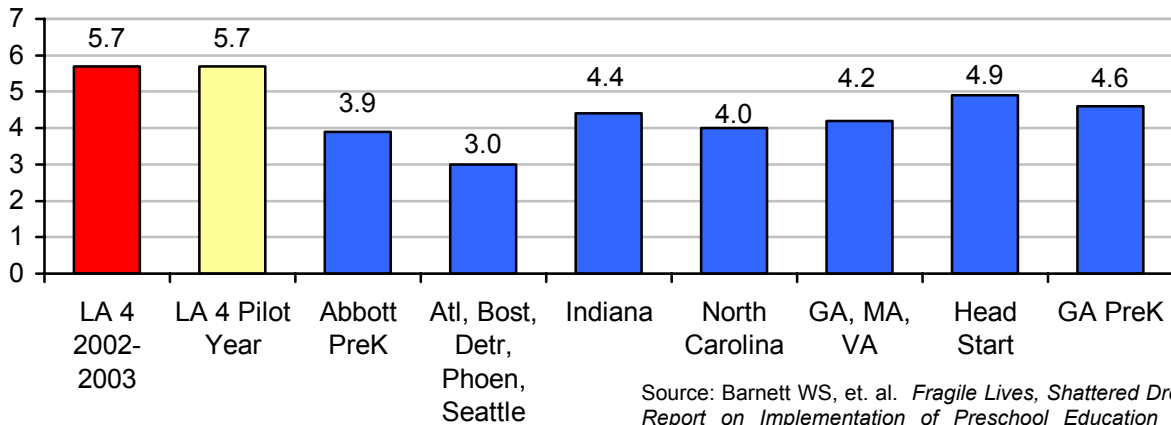


Louisiana Department of Education
Lloyd J. Rockhold Center for Child Development
LSU HSC, Department of Psychiatry
UAB Center for Educational Accountability
Georgetown University Center on Health and Education

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale–Revised (ECERS–R)

Louisiana Department of Education staff conducted the *ECERS–R* assessment in a sample of classrooms participating in the LA 4 program. The *ECERS–R* assessment takes into account seven areas related to program quality: space and furnishings, personal care routines, language-reasoning, activities, interaction, program structure, and parents and staff. A compilation of the assessment scores for a random sample of 50 classrooms rated the LA 4 classrooms “good,” with an overall score of 5.7 on a scale of 1 to 7—the same score as the pilot year and a higher score than the average ratings of other prekindergarten programs in other states.

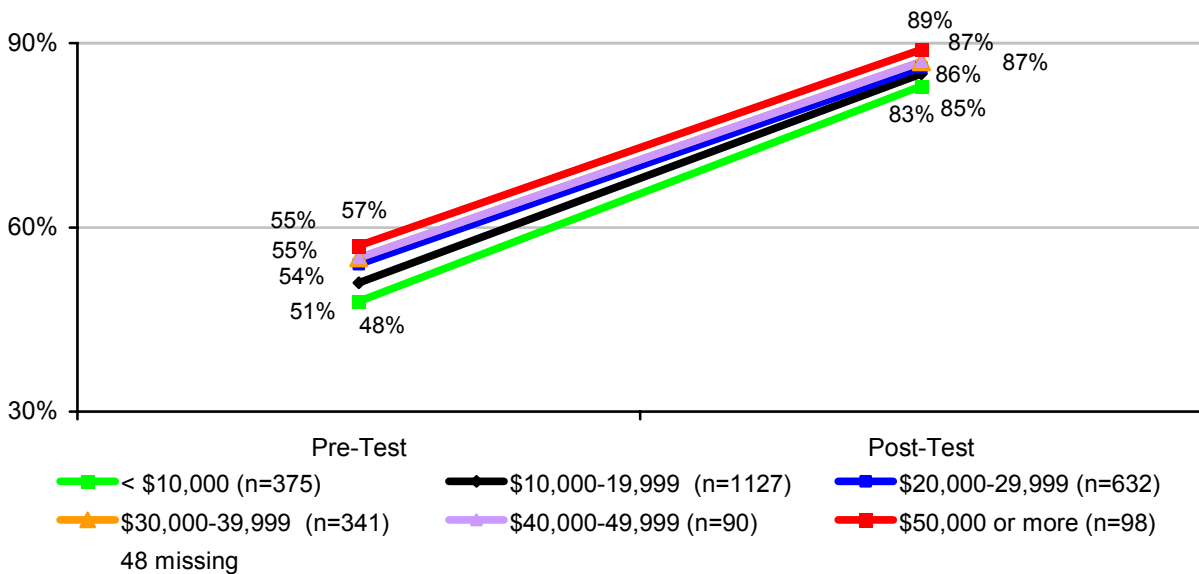
Comparison of *ECERS–R* Scores for LA 4 Programs with Quality Ratings from Other U.S. Early Care and Education Studies



Source: Barnett WS, et. al. *Fragile Lives, Shattered Dreams: A Report on Implementation of Preschool Education in New Jersey's Abbott Districts*

In 2002-2003, significant results were found in the test scores of children who participated in these high quality LA 4 programs. Analysis of children’s demographic information and test scores reveal that the program is narrowing the gap between disadvantaged students and their more affluent peers. This is consistent with the *No Child Left Behind* legislation.

Proportion Correct Responses for LA 4 Students Statewide in Language, by Family Income Level 2002-2003



SCHOOL YEAR 2002-2003

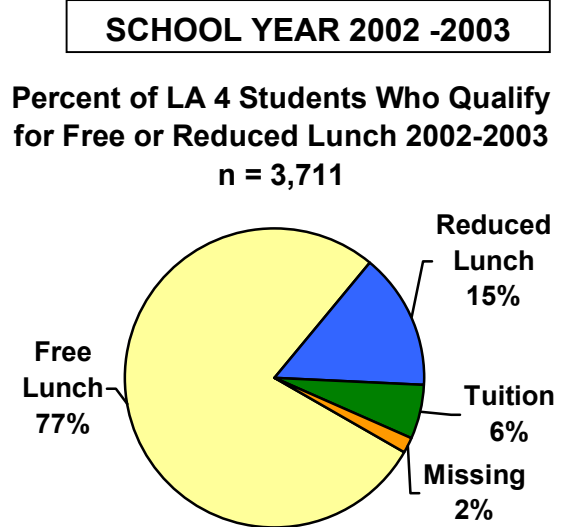
Intake Form

General demographic information was collected for 3,711 students enrolled in the LA 4 program in 2002-2003. Data analyses indicate that, statewide, over 90% of the students qualified for free or reduced lunch. These data demonstrate that the program is reaching the targeted population of at risk unserved children.

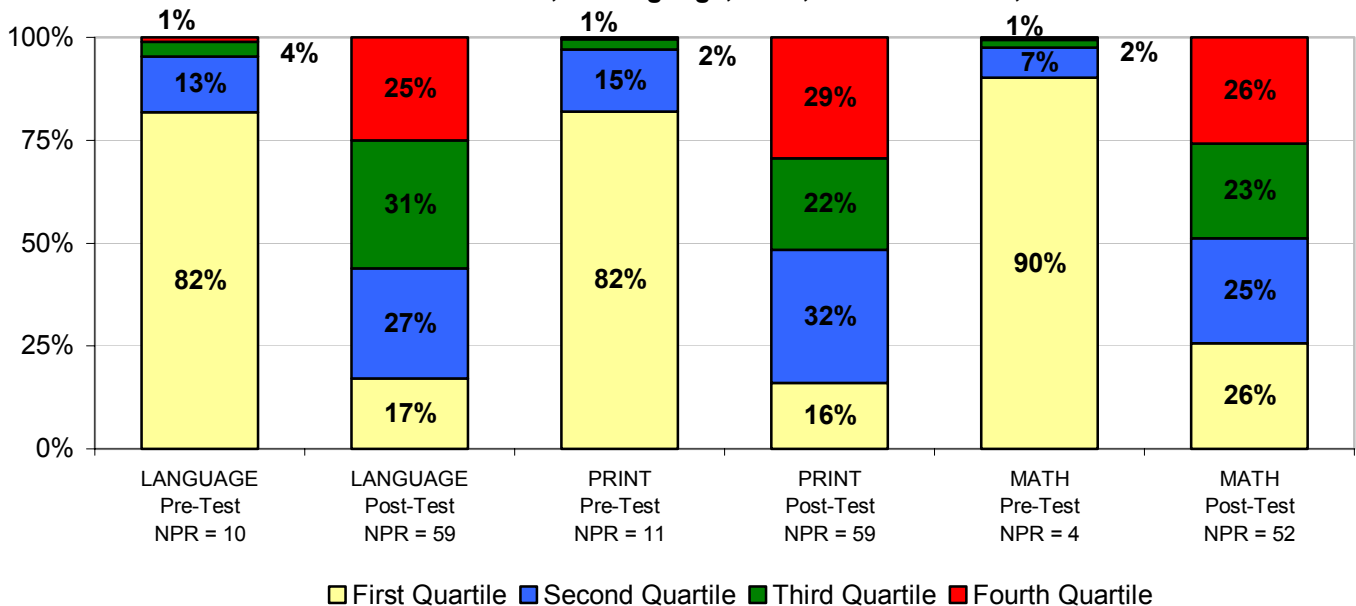
Developing Skills Checklist (DSC) – Pre-Test and Post-Test

In 2002-2003, students participating in the LA 4 program received a full year of instruction, compared to a half year of instruction in the pilot year. When comparing the test scores from the two years, it is evident that students who are exposed to a full year of instruction show greater improvement of scores from pre-test to post-test.

Test scores from the pre-test and the post-test were reported for a total of 3,711 students.* Analyses of the test scores revealed statistically significant improvement statewide from pre-test to post-test for students participating in the program. Analyses also reveal not only that more students were identified in the first quartile in the second year of LA 4 but, that after a full year of preschool intervention, more students moved to the top (fourth) quartile and fewer students were in the first quartile than in the pilot year. Post-test scores in the areas of language, print, and math improved in the second, third, and fourth quartiles and are comparable to national norms, as seen by the national percentile ranks (NPR).



Percent of LA 4 Students Statewide Scoring in the Respective Quartiles of the DSC, School Year 2002-2003, in Language, Print, and Math n = 3,711



*All graphs are based on students who had both a pre-test and a post-test score.

PILOT YEAR 2002

Intake Form

General demographic information was collected for 1,596 students enrolled in the LA 4 pilot program in 2002. Data analyses indicate that, statewide, almost 80% of the students qualified for free or reduced lunch. These data demonstrate that the program is reaching the targeted population of at-risk unserved children.

Developing Skills Checklist (DSC) – Pre-Test and Post-Test

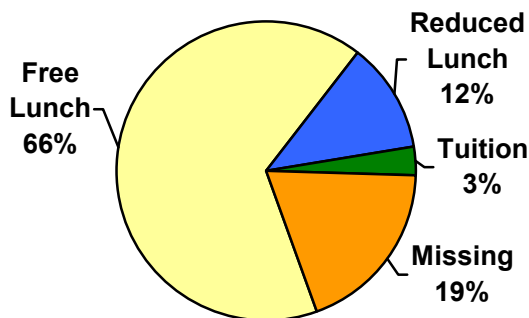
In the pilot year of the LA 4 program from January through June 2002, a pre-test and a post-test were administered to all students using a subset of the Developing Skills Checklist. Students were administered the DSC individually in the areas of language, print, and math.

Test scores from the pre-test and the post-test were reported for a total of 1,358 students.* Analyses of the test scores revealed statistically significant pre-test to post-test improvement for students statewide.

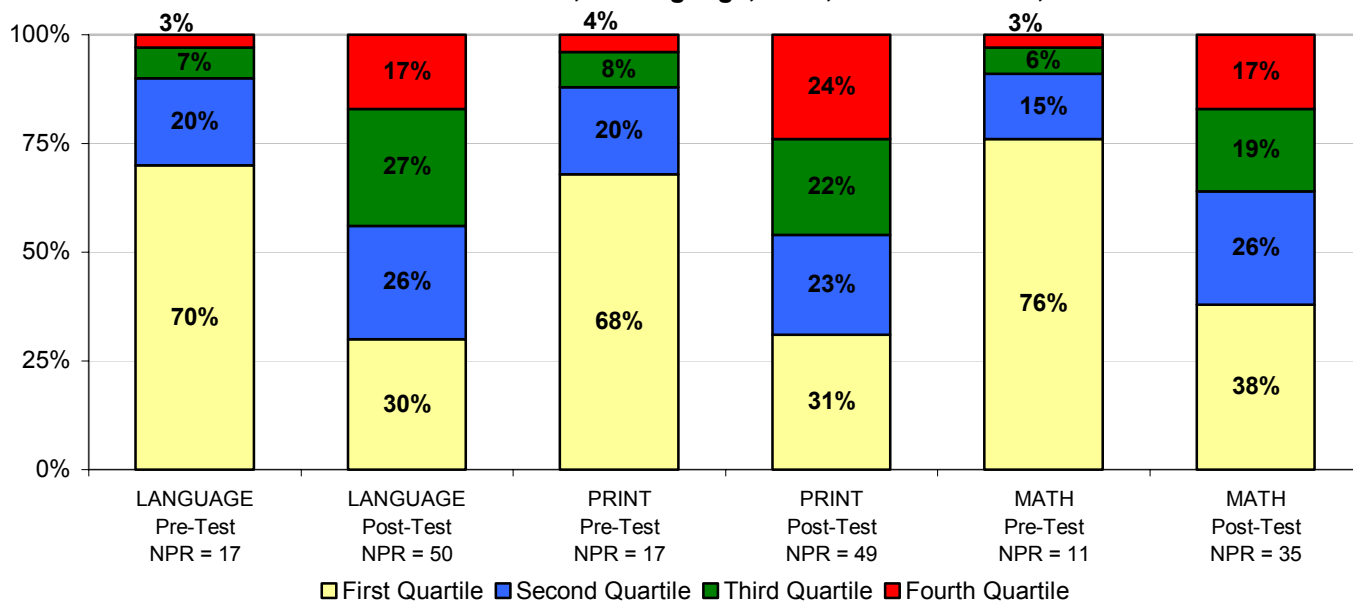
LA 4 students showed improvement by the decrease in the percent of students scoring in the lowest (first) quartile and by the increase in the percent of students scoring in the highest (fourth) quartile. Post-test scores in the areas of language, print, and math improved in the second, third, and fourth quartiles and are comparable to national norms, as seen by the national percentile ranks (NPR)**.

PILOT YEAR 2002

Percent of LA 4 Students Who Qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch Pilot 2002
n = 1,596



Percent of LA 4 Students Statewide Scoring in the Respective Quartiles of the DSC, Pilot Year 2002, in Language, Print, and Math n = 1,358



* All graphs are based on students who had both a pre-test and a post-test score.

** Any differences in the National Percentile Rank for the pilot year from previous reports are due to adjustment in method of computation.

Summary of Evaluation Results

In 2002-2003, prekindergarten intervention was provided for a full school year in the LA 4 program. The program is serving the targeted children, at-risk unserved four year olds. Participating students show significant improvement between the pre-test and post-test and will be followed as they progress through the early elementary grades.

When comparing the test scores from the two years, it is evident that students who are exposed to a full year of instruction show greater improvement of scores from pre-test to post-test. Specific analysis of the test scores also indicate that the program is narrowing the gap between disadvantaged students and their more affluent peers, consistent with the *No Child Left Behind* legislation.

The passage of Senate Bill 776 in 2001 paved the way for a statewide prekindergarten program, LA 4, to serve four year old children not currently enrolled in publicly funded prekindergarten classes. The purpose of the program is to provide universal prekindergarten classes and before-and-after school enrichment activities to four year old children eligible to enter public school kindergarten the following year. The program is provided at no cost for children eligible for free or reduced lunch.

The LA 4 program follows requirements to assure the provision of high-quality services, including certified teachers, a child-to-adult ratio of no more than 10 to 1, and use of a research-based and developmentally appropriate prekindergarten curriculum. The Louisiana State Department of Education administers LA 4. In 2002-2003, LA 4 entered its second year of operation with nineteen school districts participating, eight more than in the pilot year. These school districts provided LA 4 prekindergarten services to approximately 5,000 four year old students in approximately 250 classrooms in 2002-2003.

The Louisiana Department of Education contracted with the Loyd J. Rockhold Center for Child Development at LSU Health Sciences Center, the Center for Educational Accountability at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and the Center onr Health and Education at Georgetown University to conduct program evaluation and research activities. This report will highlight the evaluation results from the 2002-2003 school year, compared to pilot year 2002 results.

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) was conducted with administrators and teachers involved in the LA 4 program. Common strengths expressed were the high-quality program guidelines, preparation of the children for kindergarten and future learning, improvement in children's social skills, and early identification of learning challenges. Common weaknesses included lack of funding for all children, lack of experience and training opportunities for teachers, limited parent involvement, and extensive documentation requirements.

Acknowledgements

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11 Districts Participating for 2 Years

**Calcasieu
DeSoto
East Baton Rouge
Jefferson
Lafayette
LaSalle**

**Orleans
St. Bernard
St. Martin
St. Tammany
Vermilion**

8 New Districts in 2002-2003

**Evangeline
Iberia
Natchitoches
Rapides
Tangipahoa**

**Washington
Bogalusa City
Monroe City**