

Midwest Child-Parent Center Expansion

Project Description

The “Midwest Expansion of the Child-Parent Center Education Program, Preschool to Third Grade” or “Midwest CPC Expansion” project is a targeted school reform effort in Minnesota and Illinois to strengthen student achievement of preschool and elementary school-aged children from low-income families. The project is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and from local matching dollars from school districts and philanthropic organizations.

CPC provides intensive and continuous educational and family-support services through the entire school transition process, emphasizes basic skills in language arts and math, and enhances family involvement in children’s education.



What are CPCs?

The Child-Parent Center (CPC) Program is a center-based early intervention that provides comprehensive educational and family-support services to economically disadvantaged children from preschool to early elementary school. The CPC program was established in 1967 through funding from Title I of the landmark Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. It is the second oldest (after Head Start) federally funded preschool program in the U. S. and is the oldest extended early childhood intervention.

The purpose of the validation project is to assess generalizability for a broader array of social contexts. A target group of 2,352 preschool children in 33 schools will be compared with children in comparison schools receiving typical services and followed to the end of the program in third grade. More than 6,000 additional students will receive program services in kindergarten to third grade.



Key Components

1. **High-quality preschool** for up to two years in small classes taught by certified teachers.
2. Curricula and instructional practices that emphasize language, literacy, and math skills within a **structured activity-based** approach.
3. Comprehensive **family services** led by the Parent Resource Teachers and School-Community Representatives that include parental involvement and resource mobilization.
4. A **leadership team** run by the Head Teacher in collaboration with the Principal.
5. Kindergarten and school-age **continuity** through co-located or close-by centers, small classes with teacher aides, and instructional coordination by school coordinators.
6. On-going **professional development** by school coordinators to support teachers and principals in implementing and aligning evidence-based curricula and instructional practices.

Project Goals

1. Implement the CPC model with high levels of quality and following key elements and principles established by evidence of effectiveness.
2. Assess the quality of implementation of the preschool, kindergarten, and first to third grade components of the program by context and participant characteristics.
3. Evaluate the impact of the CPC program from preschool to third grade using a rigorous and multi-faceted quasi-experimental design (SRI International).
4. Assess the impact of the CPC program by child, family, and program characteristics.
5. Determine the cost-effectiveness of the program over preschool to third grade.
6. Implement a sustainability plan to facilitate program expansion in additional settings.

Project Partners

School Districts

Illinois

In Illinois, where the model began in the Chicago Public Schools in 1967, 16 schools serving over 1,500 children beginning in preschool in fall 2012 and over 5,000 additional children in kindergarten to third grade will receive services in the program up to 2017. School districts partnering to implement the program include:

- Chicago Public Schools
- Evanston-Skokie and the Child Care Center of Evanston
- McLean County Unit #5

Minnesota

Five elementary schools and one community child care site will serve more than 1,000 children in the Saint Paul Public Schools through the five-year project. An additional 200 students will be served in Virginia, Minnesota through Arrowhead Head Start and the Virginia Public Schools. Minnesota school districts partnering to implement the program are:

- Saint Paul Public Schools and the Bethel King Child Development Center
- Virginia Public Schools in collaboration with Arrowhead Head Start

Official Partners

Erikson Institute

The official training and Professional Development partner is the Erikson Institute out of Chicago, IL.

Illinois State University

Illinois State University and the Center for the Study of Education Policy is partnering with the Midwest CPC Expansion to consult on the dissemination and sustainability of the project.

SRI International

SRI international is partnering as the independent evaluator of the project.



What is HCRC?

The Human Capital Research Collaborative, sponsored by the University of Minnesota and the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, fosters multidisciplinary research on child development and social policy from birth through young adulthood. The coverage of topics is wide and includes evaluation and policy analysis of early learning programs, family, school, economic, and community influences as well as biological and psychological foundations of child health and well-being. Originally established in 2006 as the Early Childhood Research Collaborative, the HCRC explores links between human capital and economic development, public health, K-12 education and other connections. The HCRC promotes new research, convenes researchers from many different fields, provides web resources, and disseminates research through a Discussion Paper Series. HCRC is co-directed by Arthur Reynolds of the Institute of Child Development and Art Rolnick of Humphrey School of Public Affairs and former Senior Vice President and Director of Research at the Federal Reserve Bank.