

Early Care & Education *UPDATE*

State of the Child in Palm Beach County



2005-06 Data

We know that the first few years of a child's life are critical to the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. When faced with obstacles such as impoverished conditions, lack of social and emotional support systems, and lack of health care, children's outcomes are impacted short and long term. While many agencies intercede later in life as problems persist, the Children's Services Council (CSC) has always believed in taking a proactive stance in working with children and families by promoting prevention and early intervention programs, initiatives, and advocacy. The goal is to reduce and, hopefully in most cases, eliminate the need for later interventions – keeping children

from ever entering the child welfare or criminal justice system.

As research indicates time and time again, when children are given every opportunity to thrive during the first few years of their lives and are ready for school upon entry, they are much more likely to have continued success throughout their academic careers and into adulthood.

Furthermore, we know that investing in quality programs and services now will not only affect children's immediate ability to succeed in school, but also helps the community and economy. These children are less likely to need special education programs and will have higher educational attainment levels. As adults they are

much more likely to become contributing members of society through employment, less likely to be welfare dependent, become teen parents or engage in crime and more likely to have fewer health problems.

While many people want to see immediate results, and quality programs do show immediate improved outcomes for those they serve, we also need to look at the big picture and what we want for the children and families in Palm Beach County long term. This means that the best investment we can make now for our future is in preventative measures, programs and systems, especially quality early care and education.



April 2007

Dear Community Partner,

We hope you find this Early Care and Education Update of value and interest. You will see from the report that we are making strides in some areas, while not in others.

We are very excited about the progress we are making coordinating with the community to increase quality early care and education and make it available to young children. Also, our language assessments for kindergartners have shown some improvements. At the same time, our community faces challenges with racial and ethnic disparities in readiness for entering kindergartners.

We hope you will review the data and may see opportunities to build on current efforts or come up with new strategies.

This report is available on CSC's website. If you already received a copy of this report, please pass one to a friend.

Sincerely,

Gaetana D. Ebbola
Chief Executive Officer



For every dollar spent on quality child care programs, we save \$17 in later costs for special education, juvenile crime, and social service payments.

For every dollar spent on quality child care, hundreds of dollars are added to the tax rolls by mothers who can afford to work.

Quality early childhood education programs for low-income 3- and 4-year olds offer benefits of between \$1,500 and \$10,000 per child.

Every dollar invested in prevention today will save money tomorrow.

On an ongoing basis, CSC monitors countywide data, comparing it to other counties of similar size and to the state in order to explore trends and determine overall improvements and shortcomings. This data affords the organization an overall look at Palm Beach County's standing on various outcomes and helps provide information for planning, policymaking, and advocacy.

CSC also monitors and examines outcomes for the children it serves through the early care and education system in order to evaluate what is and is not working in regards to program and service provision. CSC funds both slots to support children eligible for subsidized child care and the Quality Improvement System (QIS) – a system that strives to improve the quality of all child care centers, school-based centers and family day care homes in the county. Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPPY) and Parenting Smart Babies are also CSC-funded programs. Both are home-based visiting programs designed to provide services to parents in an effort to improve their children's readiness for school. Another program that provides services to children in need is Comprehensive Services. This program serves families with children age's birth to five years in child care settings across Palm Beach County. Health Care District of Palm Beach County staff includes family development coordinators (social workers) and nurses. Services offered include classroom observations and consultations with child care staff, child screening and assessment, referral and linkages to community resources, consultation on behavioral health and physical health issues, and family-focused supportive services targeting children's school success.

In addition to the programs that CSC funds, other community partners are also working towards promoting and enhancing school readiness. School readiness is significant to a child's well-being and success. We hope that policymakers, funders, government and provider agencies/organizations, and other community partners will review the data found within this report and act on it. It is important that we all work together to determine effective solutions, as well as continue with current programs and initiatives that appear to make a constructive difference in the lives of children and families in Palm Beach County.

We are making some progress. Over the past year, we have seen improved scores of kindergarten students taking the

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Literacy Skills (DIBELS), one of the school readiness screening tools. Overall, the scores among various races and ethnicities have also shown improvement, although the improvement has been more dramatic for white students, than for those of other races and ethnicities. However, disparities continue to exist and scores on the Early Childhood Observation System (ECHOS), a new school readiness tool, are cause for concern given that the percentage of Palm Beach County's children scoring poorly was higher than that of the state and all similar counties. Continued efforts, funding and collaboration with partners will be critical if we are to make significant strides in the area of school readiness and, ultimately, school success.

"Notably, the first few years of life are a particularly sensitive period in the process of development, laying a foundation for cognitive functioning; behavioral, social, and self-regulatory capacities; and physical health in childhood and beyond. During these early years, a variety of factors are critical to healthy development. They include the nature of early relationships with caregivers, the extent of cognitive stimulation, and access to adequate nutrition and health care. Some children will be resilient in the face of various stressors in early childhood, while healthy development will be compromised for others, with temporary or long-lasting effects." (Karoly, Kilburn, Cannon, 2005, Summary XV)

Data - Demographics

What does the early care and education population look like? Before reviewing outcome data, it is important to look at demographic data for those that this system serves. This brief look helps us understand what factors may impact the data. For example, if we know how many children live in working households, we can begin understanding the need for child care. Examining data on children that live in households where the parent(s) speak languages other than English provides us with some insight into why some children are doing worse in the area of school readiness, and allows us to review the level of

resources needed to assist in preparing these children for entry into school.

According to the U.S. Census, an estimated 76,759 children birth to four were living in Palm Beach County in 2005, the most recent data available. Interestingly, projections indicate a decline in numbers by 2010 for Palm Beach, Pinellas and Broward counties. However, by 2015, Palm Beach County will again see a jump in numbers and is projected to have the second highest increase in population - an 18.7% increase between 2005 and 2015, behind only Orange County at 23.6% (Table 1).

The 2005 population estimate from the Bureau of Economic and Business Research indicates that, of the children birth to four living in Palm Beach County, 47% are white non-Hispanic, 24.9% black non-Hispanic and 24.7% Hispanic. The breakdowns are quite similar to those found within the state (Figure 1).

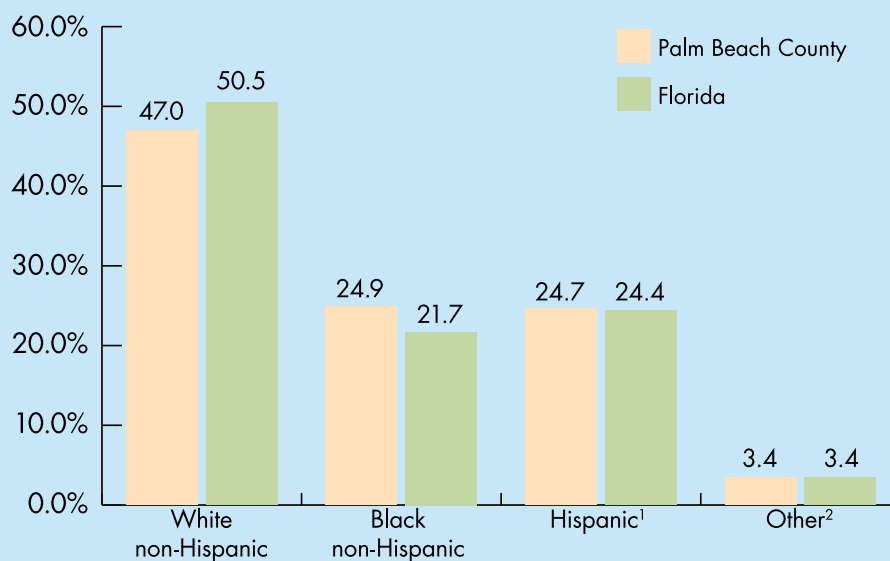
Across the nation, 13.3% of the population lives in poverty. In Florida, in 2005, 12.8% or over two million people lived in poverty compared to 11.1% (137,963) in Palm Beach County. Of children ages birth to 4 in the county, 19.4% (14,502) were living in poverty (Table 2).

Table 1 - Population of Children Birth to 4 (Rev. 1/31/07)

| Geographic Area | Census 2000 | Estimate 2005 | Projections | | % Change 2000-05 | % Change | |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | | | 2010 | 2015 | | 2005-10 | 2005-15 |
| Florida | 945,823 | 1,112,350 | 1,144,072 | 1,217,099 | 15.0% | 2.8% | 15.0% |
| Broward | 103,041 | 119,840 | 113,852 | 121,238 | 14.0% | -5.3% | 13.2% |
| Dade | 145,752 | 168,736 | 169,429 | 172,924 | 13.6% | 0.4% | 3.8% |
| Duval | 56,247 | 63,936 | 64,548 | 66,744 | 12.0% | 0.9% | 7.7% |
| Hillsborough | 68,444 | 80,604 | 83,279 | 89,341 | 15.1% | 3.2% | 16.6% |
| Orange | 61,375 | 78,471 | 86,321 | 94,355 | 21.8% | 9.1% | 23.6% |
| Palm Beach | 62,913 | 76,759 | 76,685 | 83,128 | 18.0% | -0.1% | 18.7% |
| Pinellas | 45,354 | 48,188 | 47,518 | 48,359 | 5.9% | -1.4% | 2.2% |

Source: U.S. Census

Figure 1 - Population of Children Birth to 4 by Race/Ethnicity (Rev. 10/13/05)



¹ Hispanic is an ethnic classification including persons categorized as Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture.

² Other race/ethnicity is not defined.

Source: Bureau of Economic and Business Research

This was an increase from 2004, when 17.9% (12,992) were in poverty. When the proportion of impoverished children (birth-4) was compared to similar counties in Florida, Hillsborough County had the greatest increase between 2004 and 2005 – 14.5% to 20.9%. Also interesting is that Pinellas, Duval, and Dade showed a decrease in

the percentage of children birth to four living in poverty. In comparison to other counties, Palm Beach County ranked third highest in terms of the percentage of children birth to four living in poverty. The same was true in 2005 looking at the birth to 5 population. (Figure 2).

Table 2 - Proportion of the Population Living in Poverty, 2005 - Estimate (Rev. 1/27/07)

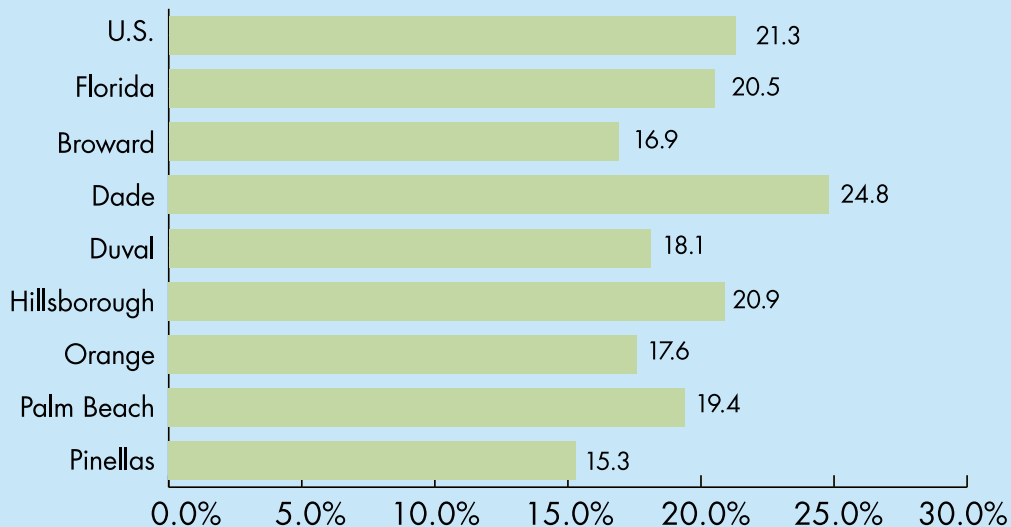
| Geography | Total Population ¹ | Income in the Past 12 Months Below Poverty Level | Birth to 4 | | | Birth to 5 | | |
|--------------|-------------------------------|--|------------|-----------|---|------------|-----------|---|
| | | | Total | Poverty | Percent of Population Living in Poverty | Total | Poverty | Percent of Population Living in Poverty |
| U.S. | | 38,231,474 | 19,959,312 | 4,242,948 | 21.3% | 23,811,416 | 5,002,671 | 21.0% |
| Florida | 17,308,881 | 2,214,381 | 1,090,190 | 223,720 | 20.5% | 1,299,996 | 262,596 | 20.2% |
| Broward | 1,750,276 | 195,059 | 117,820 | 19,970 | 16.9% | 141,740 | 23,199 | 16.4% |
| Dade | 2,321,665 | 413,176 | 165,746 | 41,039 | 24.8% | 194,120 | 47,934 | 24.7% |
| Duval | 805,825 | 95,961 | 61,279 | 11,093 | 18.1% | 74,181 | 13,100 | 17.7% |
| Hillsborough | 1,105,718 | 143,831 | 77,150 | 16,161 | 20.9% | 91,471 | 20,205 | 22.1% |
| Orange | 1,000,347 | 126,201 | 78,159 | 13,756 | 17.6% | 93,294 | 15,926 | 17.1% |
| Palm Beach | 1,241,115 | 137,963 | 74,713 | 14,502 | 19.4% | 88,634 | 16,435 | 18.5% |
| Pinellas | 903,281 | 100,355 | 47,942 | 7,324 | 15.3% | 58,144 | 8,957 | 15.4% |

¹ For whom poverty status is determined: Total (Estimate)

Note: Data is limited to the household population and excludes the population living in institutions, college dormitories and other group quarters.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 2 - Proportion of the Population of Children Birth to 4 Living in Poverty, 2005 - Estimate (Rev. 1/27/07)



Note: Data is limited to the household population and excludes the population living in institutions, college dormitories and other group quarters.

Another factor which impacts a student's school readiness is the language spoken at home. In Palm Beach County, 61.1% of students taking school readiness screens had parents whose primary home language was English. Spanish was the second most frequent language spoken (23.1%) followed by Haitian Creole (7.2%). These three languages accounted for 95% of the primary languages spoken in the homes of children. This data is important given its relationship to school readiness outcomes (Figure 5 - see page 12).

Also important in understanding the need for early care and education is the employment status of parents. As seen in Table 3, it is apparent that the need is quite high given that 61.6% of children ages five and younger live in a single-parent household where the parent is working or a two-parent household where both work. When compared to 2004 data, the number of two-parent households has decreased significantly from 74.8% to 65.4%. Conversely, the percentage living in single-parent households has increased from 25.2% to 34.6% in 2005. The percentage of children that live in a household where the parent(s) do not work remained relatively constant at 8.6% in 2004 and 8.5% in 2005.

This data relates directly to the children in need of subsidized child care. While many families are eligible to receive services, many do not because of limited funds, which means they are placed on waiting lists. According to the Office of Early Learning, as of September 2006, some 3,458 children ages birth to five were waiting for care (Figure 3). Of these children, 54.5% were in families living below 100% of the poverty level and 45% were in

families with incomes between 100-185% of the poverty level (Table 4).

In November 2006, a total of 5,118 children birth to five were enrolled in subsidized care (Figure 3). Children are eligible based on various factors, including those considered at-risk, receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), being impoverished, migrant, or having low-income working parents who are part of a purchasing pool. To be eligible for child care in the at-risk category, children must be in Department of Children and Families (DCF) protective services, in out-of-home placement, or considered TANF at-risk. TANF at-risk is defined as children that are adjudicated dependent and have an approved home study and are either placed by the court with relatives under protective supervision or with relatives who have temporary custody.

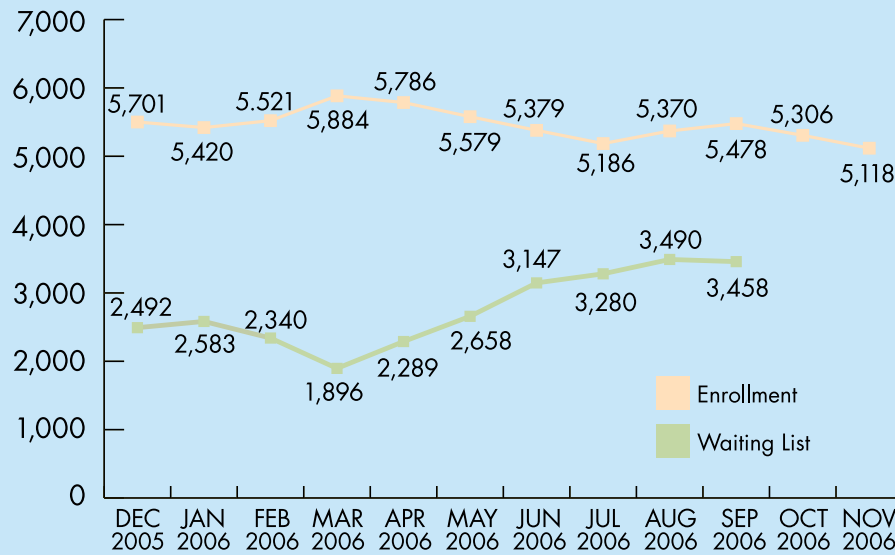
TANF includes children whose parents receive temporary cash assistance and are involved in job preparation or who are receiving Transitional Child Care/Transitional Education assistance. Impoverishment includes children whose parents are at 185% of the poverty threshold or below. Finally, purchasing pool funding is for children whose working parents have incomes no more than 200% of the poverty level. The funding pool is a dollar-for-dollar match from employers, local government, and other contributors. In Palm Beach County, for every dollar that an employer contributes, CSC matches it and the state doubles CSC's local match (the split is 25/25/50). In Palm Beach County, the majority of children received child care subsidies because of their families' poverty status (Table 5).

Table 3 - Family Structure and Employment Status of Parents with Children, 2005 (Rev. 1/27/07)

| Family Structure & Employment | Palm Beach County 5 Years Old And Under | | Florida 5 Years Old And Under | |
|---|--|---------|----------------------------------|---------|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Two Parent Household | | | | |
| Two-parent household - Both parents work | 28,778 | 33.4% | 436,284 | 34.7% |
| Two-parent household - One parent works | 25,749 | 29.9% | 350,073 | 27.8% |
| Two-parent household - Neither parent works | 1,799 | 2.1% | 26,111 | 2.1% |
| Total two-parent households | 56,326 | 65.4% | 812,468 | 64.6% |
| Single Parent Household | | | | |
| Single-parent household - Parent works | 24,344 | 28.2% | 345,937 | 27.5% |
| Single-parent household - Parent doesn't work | 5,516 | 6.4% | 99,170 | 7.9% |
| Total single-parent households | 29,860 | 34.6% | 445,107 | 35.4% |
| Total children living in a family | 86,186 | | 1,257,575 | |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 3 - Subsidized Child Care Ages Birth to 5 - Palm Beach County (Rev. 1/26/07)



Note: Waiting list data is not available for October and November 2006

Source: Agency for Workforce Innovation

Table 4 - Child Care Waiting List Ages Birth to 5 - Palm Beach County, September 2006

| Age (in years) | <100% | 100-185% | Respite Care |
|----------------|-------|----------|--------------|
| < 1 | 398 | 270 | 0 |
| 1-2 | 451 | 367 | 1 |
| 2-3 | 405 | 339 | 2 |
| 3-4 | 362 | 340 | 1 |
| 4-5 | 269 | 240 | 0 |
| Total | 1,885 | 1,556 | 4 |

Source: Agency for Workforce Innovation

Table 5 - Child Care Enrollment by Eligibility Categories - Palm Beach County, November 2006 (Rev. 1/26/07)

| Age | Type of Eligibility | | | | | Total |
|---------|---------------------|-------|---------|-----------------|----------|--------|
| | At-risk/DCF | TANF | Poverty | Purchasing Pool | Migrants | |
| < 1 | 122 | 103 | 135 | 32 | 13 | 405 |
| 1-2 | 204 | 174 | 443 | 85 | 23 | 929 |
| 2-3 | 218 | 206 | 663 | 117 | 27 | 1,231 |
| 3-4 | 216 | 189 | 749 | 116 | 44 | 1,314 |
| 4-5 | 152 | 147 | 790 | 111 | 39 | 1,239 |
| Total | 912 | 819 | 2,780 | 461 | 146 | 5,118 |
| Percent | 17.8% | 16.0% | 54.3% | 9.0% | 2.9% | 100.0% |

Source: Agency for Workforce Innovation

A Glimpse at Current Programs

Quality Improvement System

The Quality Improvement System (QIS) is funded and managed by the Children’s Services Council. This voluntary system assists providers with resources so that they can offer services and programs within improved environments for the children they serve. Currently there are 24 schools, 24 homes and 62 centers in the QIS, for a total of 110 sites. As of September 2006, there were 36 Quality Improvement System (QIS) programs that had an assessment completed both in 2005 and 2006 (nine child care centers, 14 school-based sites and 13 family child care homes). Each year, child care sites are given an overall star rating indicating improvement. The 2006 overall star ratings of these 36 child care providers were compared with their 2005 star ratings to see if progress has been made between the 2005 and 2006 assessments. It should be noted, however; in 2005 a provider could opt to be evaluated using only the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) pathway, the scores from the ECERS (80%) and the professional development pathway (20%), or all pathways.

Beginning January 1, 2006, the star rating of all the QIS child care centers were calculated on a weighted scale using all pathways and family child care homes were rated based on both the Family Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS) and the Professional Development pathways. Due to these changes, a comparison between 2005 and 2006 should be viewed with caution. However, even with stricter assessment standards, 39% of sites are showing improvement, more sites were involved in the QIS system in 2006 than in the prior year, and a significantly higher number of family care homes have become involved in this voluntary process, each working to become higher quality and provide better services to the children they serve (Table 6). In a recent analysis, 90% of child care

providers indicated that they were satisfied with the QIS system. Also notable is that 80% of QIS sites were rated at a 3- or 4-star level.

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)

Parents/guardians are the first teachers in every child’s life. HIPPY, a home-based program for children ages 3-5, was founded on that principle and is designed to support parents by providing them with the tools necessary to teach their preschool-age children the basic skills and knowledge needed to ensure school success. This program encourages parental involvement and removes barriers such as lack of financial resources and/or parental education. In Palm Beach County, the program is funded by CSC and managed by The Center for Family Services of Palm Beach County, Inc. In a recent CSC evaluation, data indicated that HIPPY graduates have performed better on school readiness tests compared to non-HIPPY kindergartners. Using data from last years school readiness screen, the Early Screening Inventory-Kindergarten (ESI-K), researchers found that HIPPY graduates had a higher mean score than those not involved in HIPPY, 89% of HIPPY graduates scored Ready Now compared to 80% of non-HIPPY kindergartners; and none of the HIPPY graduates scored Not Ready Yet, compared to 6% of the non-HIPPY kindergartners. These evaluations will continue and data is currently being examined for HIPPY participants using the new Early Childhood Observation System screening tool.

Parenting Smart Babies

The Parenting Smart Babies (PSB) model recognizes the pivotal role parents play in shaping their children’s lives and how their children relate to learning throughout their lives. This home visiting program for children ages birth to three years is designed to provide services to stay at-

Table 6 - Results of the Overall Star Rating Assessment - Palm Beach County, 2005-06 (Rev. 1/26/07)

| Improvement | Child Care Centers | | School-Based Sites | | Family Child Care Homes | | Total | Percent |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------|--------------------|---------|-------------------------|---------|-------|---------|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | | |
| 1 star to 3 stars | 3 | 33.30% | 4 | 29% | 7 | 54% | 14 | 39% |
| Maintained 4 stars | 1 | 11.10% | 8 | 57% | 3 | 23% | 12 | 33% |
| Decreased 1 star | 3 | 33.30% | 2 | 14% | 1 | 8% | 6 | 17% |
| No improvement | 2 | 22.20% | | | 2 | 15% | 4 | 11% |
| Total | 9 | | 14 | | 13 | | 36 | 100% |

Source: Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County

home parents whose children are not receiving early care and education services outside the home. These families represent a diverse, low-income community in Palm Beach County in zip codes 33460, 33461, 33463.

Overall, the program's goal is to achieve school readiness. The three program objectives listed below demonstrate how PSB's activities support school readiness in a home environment:

1. Optimize child development of infants and toddlers
2. Empower parents as primary educators of their children
3. Provide parents support and linkages to community resources

PSB seeks to develop emergent literacy in young children through the use of The Growing Great Kids curriculum. This curriculum is strength-based, solution-focused and literacy-enriched, and is specifically designed to support families in home visitation programs. PSB greatly emphasizes developing parental empathy and supporting parents to respond sensitively to their children's needs and enhance child development. Additionally, this program facilitates parents' access to resources in the community, links them to needed services, and enables them to provide their child with early education that promotes literacy.

In the year since its inception, PSB has seen success among the families it serves. The program has been able to build trust with and create a sense of empowerment among families. Using observational checklists and

qualitative methods, PSB demonstrated that over 80% of parents are empathically communicating with their children and they understand how to strengthen the parent-child bond. Families are also able to identify community resources.

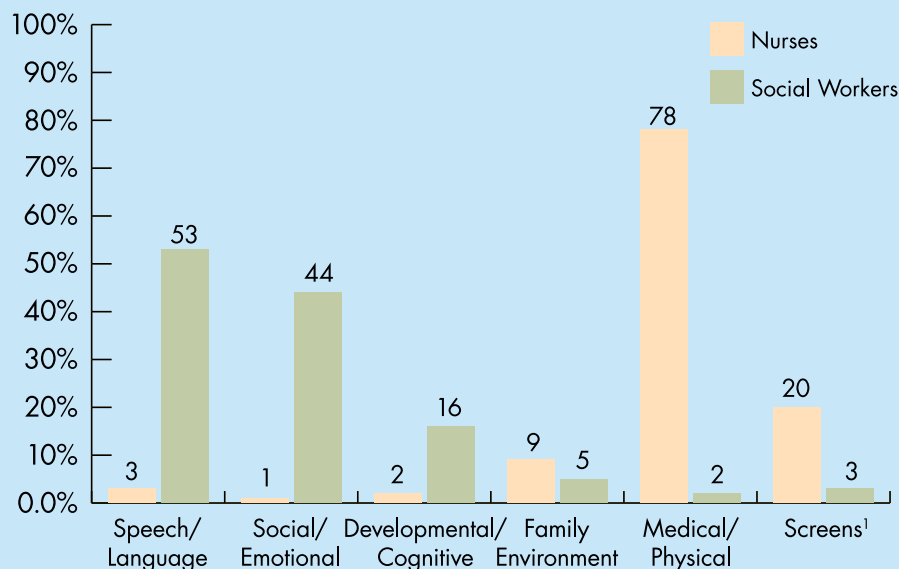
Comprehensive Services

Another initiative that CSC funds, is the Comprehensive Services program. Its goal is to identify low-income children birth-to-five participating in child care programs that are believed to be at-risk of having physical, social, emotional, and/or behavioral problems and link these children and their families to intervention services. As can be seen from the following data, the leading cause for concern by social workers is speech and language, followed by social and emotional concerns, 39% of which are behavioral. Not surprisingly, medical and physical issues (78%) were the main presenting concern for nurses (Figure 4).

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten

In November 2002, electors approved Amendment 8 to the state constitution, requiring the legislature to establish a universal early education program for four-year-old children by the 2005 school year. This law allows parents to either enroll their children in a 540-instructional-hour (three hours per day) school-year program or a 300-instructional-hour summer program. The maximum class size allowed for the school-year program is 18 with at least four students enrolled. The class must have one pre-

Figure 4 - Reasons for Service by Comprehensive Services Staff - Palm Beach County, July 2005 through June 2006 (Rev. 2/05/07)



¹ Screens include vision/hearing, dental, physical development, and immunizations.

Source: Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago.

kindergarten teacher, and, when the class size is over 10 students, there must be an additional adult in the classroom. The summer program has a staff-to-child ratio of 1:10 with each class required to have at least four students, but not exceeding 10. This program is being implemented by the early learning coalitions within the state. Voluntary Pre-kindergarten (VPK) programs are offered by private child care providers and by public schools wishing to participate. Providers must register with their Early Learning Coalition and be licensed.

The enrollment for VPK has not met projections. Many believe this is the direct result of the design of the state program which does not meet the needs of parents, mainly because it is only a three-hour day, as well as the fact that such a short day does not allow for true quality programming. Palm Beach County's enrollment for summer 2005/06 was 870. The school year enrollment for 2005/06 was 5,708. The school year enrollment for 2006/07 is 6,200.

Outcome Data: School Readiness

In 2006, the school district changed the school readiness screen from the School Readiness Universal Screening System (SRUSS), which consisted of two school readiness screening instruments, the Early Screening Inventory-Kindergarten (ESI-K) and the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). The new screening system is now known as the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS). It consists of 19 selected items from a new tool, the Early Childhood Observation System (ECHOS) and the DIBELS (letter naming and initial sounds measures). Due to the change in screens

being used, the ECHOS results will be a single-year presentation of data with no trend comparison.

The ECHOS ratings consist of Consistently Demonstrating, Emerging/Progressing, and Not Yet Demonstrating. This screen measures a range of skills in various domains, including language and literacy; social and personal skills; and science. In Palm Beach County, 43% of children scored Consistently Demonstrating, defined as the child demonstrated what he or she should know and be able to do at the beginning of kindergarten, slightly higher than the state at 42%. However, the county also scored much higher in regards to those children Not Yet Demonstrating the appropriate skill development, 17% compared to 14%. In comparison to similar counties, Palm Beach County scored the highest in children not demonstrating the skills necessary for school entry (Table 7).

When examining 2006 DIBELS data, results do show improvement from last year's scores. For example, in the letter naming domain, the percentage of children scoring above average or low risk increased from 68% last year to 72% this year. In regards to the initial sounds section, there was also an increase from 63% of children scoring above average or low risk to 65% this past year. Also worth noting is that Palm Beach County children are scoring better in both letter naming and initial sounds sections than the state as a whole and have done so for at least the past two years.

When data from DIBELS is examined by similar counties, Palm Beach County is ranked third highest for above-average/low-risk scores on letter naming (72%) and second highest (tied with Broward County) for fluency

Table 7 - Children Ready for School Based on ECHOS¹, 2006 (Rev. 2/05/07)

| County | Consistently Demonstrating ² | Emerging/ Progressing ³ | Not Yet Demonstrating ⁴ |
|--------------|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Florida | 42% | 44% | 14% |
| Broward | 38% | 49% | 14% |
| Dade | 35% | 49% | 16% |
| Duval | 33% | 52% | 15% |
| Hillsborough | 47% | 40% | 13% |
| Orange | 43% | 42% | 14% |
| Palm Beach | 43% | 40% | 17% |
| Pinellas | 47% | 43% | 10% |

¹ Early Childhood Observation System

² Consistently Demonstrating is defined as the child demonstrated what he or she should know and be able to do at the beginning of kindergarten.

³ Emerging/Progressing is defined as the child demonstrated some of the skills he or she needs to know or be able to do at the beginning of kindergarten.

⁴ Not Yet Demonstrating is defined as appropriate skill development was not yet demonstrated during the screening.

Source: Florida Department of Education

on the initial sounds section (65%). All counties have students scoring worse on the initial sounds section than on the letter naming section (Table 8).

Racial and Ethnic Disparities

Palm Beach County's school system is a racially and ethnically diverse environment, much like the county as a whole. The racial and ethnic make-up of those students that took the ECHOS test in 2006-07 was also diverse. Among all the students, 37.7% were white non-Hispanic, followed by 27.5% black non-Hispanic, 25.9% Hispanic,

5.8% multiracial, 2.8% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.4% American Indian/Alaskan Native.

As shown in Table 9, the percentage of students considered to be Consistently Demonstrating readiness is not impressive for any of the racial and ethnic groups. However, white non-Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and multiracial students were more likely to be considered Consistently Demonstrating than other students (58.7%, 52% and 49.4%, respectively). Conversely, Hispanics had one of the lowest percentages, with only 29.7% of children Consistently Demonstrating and also had 27.2%

Table 8 - Children Ready for School Based on DIBELS¹, 2006 (Rev. 2/05/07)

| County | Letter Naming | | | | Initial Sounds | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| | Above Average ² | Low Risk ³ | Moderate Risk ⁴ | High Risk ⁵ | Above Average ² | Low Risk ³ | Moderate Risk ⁴ | High Risk ⁵ |
| Florida | 56% | 14% | 14% | 16% | 44% | 19% | 19% | 18% |
| Broward | 66% | 12% | 10% | 11% | 45% | 20% | 19% | 16% |
| Dade | 53% | 14% | 14% | 19% | 36% | 20% | 22% | 23% |
| Duval | 63% | 13% | 13% | 11% | 44% | 20% | 19% | 17% |
| Hillsborough | 54% | 13% | 14% | 18% | 45% | 19% | 19% | 18% |
| Orange | 54% | 13% | 14% | 18% | 47% | 19% | 16% | 19% |
| Palm Beach | 59% | 13% | 12% | 16% | 46% | 19% | 17% | 18% |
| Pinellas | 55% | 16% | 15% | 13% | 46% | 20% | 18% | 15% |

¹ Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills

² Above Average is defined as at or above the 60th percentile.

³ Low Risk is defined as at grade level.

⁴ Moderate Risk is defined as below grade level and in need of additional intervention.

⁵ High Risk is defined as seriously below grade level and in need of substantial intervention.

Source: Florida Department of Education

Table 9 - ECHOS¹ Status by Race/Ethnicity - Palm Beach County, 2006 (Rev. 2/05/07)

| Status | Race/Ethnicity | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| | White non-Hispanic (n=4306) | Black non-Hispanic (n=3145) | Hispanic (n=2961) | Asian/Pacific Islander (n=319) | American Indian/Alaskan Native (n=42) | Multiracial (n=662) |
| Consistently Demonstrating ² | 58.7% | 32.9% | 29.7% | 52.0% | 28.6% | 49.4% |
| Emerging/Progressing ³ | 33.8% | 46.2% | 43.2% | 36.1% | 38.1% | 37.8% |
| Not Yet Demonstrating ⁴ | 7.4% | 20.9% | 27.2% | 11.9% | 33.3% | 12.8% |

¹ Early Childhood Observation System

² Consistently Demonstrating is defined as the child demonstrated what he or she should know and be able to do at the beginning of kindergarten.

³ Emerging/Progressing is defined as the child demonstrated some of the skills he or she needs to know or be able to do at the beginning of kindergarten.

⁴ Not Yet Demonstrating is defined as appropriate skill development was not yet demonstrated during the screening.

Source: Children's Services Council created this table using data from the School District of Palm Beach County.

of students categorized as Not Yet Demonstrating. A high percentage of black non-Hispanics scored Not Yet Demonstrating compared to the white non-Hispanic population. More specifically, nearly four times as many black non-Hispanic students (27.2%) were Not Yet Demonstrating readiness as white non-Hispanic (7.4%) students. Overall, American Indian/Alaskan Natives had the worst screening scores, but this data should be viewed cautiously due to the small number of students taking the test (n=42).

These differences may partially be explained by language difficulties. For example, results show that there were a much higher percentage of children that lived in families where the primary language spoken at home was Spanish or Creole scoring Not Yet Demonstrating and a lower percentage scoring Consistently Demonstrating than those where the primary language was English (Figure 5).

Hispanics had the highest percentage of children categorized as High Risk on the initial sounds sections of the DIBELS and second highest on the letter naming section when compared to other racial and ethnic groups. In fact, in comparison to white non-Hispanics, the percentage of American Indian/Alaskan Native and Hispanic children scoring High Risk on letter naming

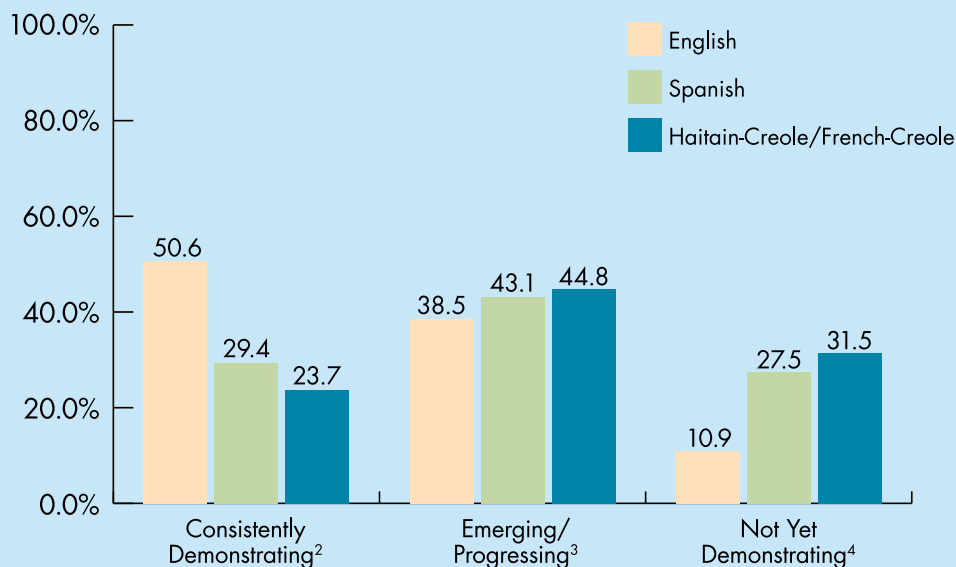
was more than four times as high as white non-Hispanics (36.6% and 29.3% versus 6%) and approximately three times as high on the initial sounds section (25% and 27.5% versus 8.7%). Again, data related to American Indian/Alaskan Native should be viewed cautiously given the small number of students screened. White non-Hispanics also had almost double the percentage of children scoring Above Average on both sections of the DIBELS when compared to Hispanics (Table 10).

Free and Reduced Lunch Program

The National School Lunch Program, commonly known as the Free and Reduced Lunch Program, was established in 1946. This federally funded program provides lunches to children in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions at either a reasonable cost or free, depending on poverty level. Families that have incomes at 130% or less of the poverty guidelines receive food stamps, TANF, or assistance from the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations are eligible to receive free meals for their children. Families with incomes between 131-185% of poverty are eligible to receive reduced-price meals.

Among kindergarten students 5,250 (43.7%) were entitled to receive free lunches, 964 students (8%) were

Figure 5 - Top Three Languages Spoken at Home by ECHOS¹ Status - Palm Beach County, 2006
(Rev. 2/05/07)



¹ Early Childhood Observation System

² Consistently Demonstrating is defined as the child demonstrated what he or she should know and be able to do at the beginning of kindergarten.

³ Emerging/Progressing is defined as the child demonstrated some of the skills he or she needs to know or be able to do at the beginning of kindergarten.

⁴ Not Yet Demonstrating is defined as appropriate skill development was not yet demonstrated during the screening.

Source: Children's Services Council created this figure using data from the School District of Palm Beach County

Table 10 - DIBELS¹ Status by Race/Ethnicity - Palm Beach County, 2006 (Rev. 2/05/07)

| Status | Race/Ethnicity | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| | White non-Hispanic | | Black non-Hispanic | | Hispanic | | Asian/Pacific Islander | | American Indian/Alaskan Native | | Multiracial | |
| | n= | n= | n= | n= | n= | n= | n= | n= | n= | n= | n= | n= |
| | 4195 | 4282 | 3007 | 3127 | 2699 | 2834 | 299 | 307 | 40 | 41 | 631 | 653 |
| | Letter Naming | Initial Sounds | Letter Naming | Initial Sounds | Letter Naming | Initial Sounds | Letter Naming | Initial Sounds | Letter Naming | Initial Sounds | Letter Naming | Initial Sounds |
| Above average ² | 75.5% | 62.2% | 53.9% | 34.7% | 38.6% | 32.9% | 81.8% | 52.8% | 41.5% | 25.0% | 66.9% | 51.8% |
| Low risk ³ | 11.4% | 17.0% | 13.9% | 19.8% | 13.2% | 19.2% | 5.9% | 19.1% | 9.8% | 30.0% | 13.2% | 19.8% |
| Moderate risk ⁴ | 7.1% | 12.1% | 14.2% | 21.7% | 18.9% | 20.4% | 7.5% | 15.1% | 12.2% | 20.0% | 9.3% | 15.2% |
| High risk ⁵ | 6.0% | 8.7% | 18.0% | 23.7% | 29.3% | 27.5% | 4.9% | 13.0% | 36.6% | 25.0% | 10.6% | 13.2% |

Note: Missing data and duplicate cases were removed from this analysis.

¹ Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills

² Above Average is defined as at or above the 60th percentile.

³ Low Risk is defined as at grade level.

⁴ Moderate Risk is defined as below grade level and in need of additional intervention.

⁵ High Risk is defined as seriously below grade level and in need of substantial intervention.

Source: Children's Services Council created this table using data from the School District of Palm Beach County.

eligible for reduced-priced meals, and 421 (3.5%) applied and were not eligible. As shown in Figure 6 and Table 11, children that received free or reduced lunches were also less likely to do well on the ECHOS and DIBELS screening tools. This data is important to examine because of the relationship between poor outcomes and poverty.

When ECHOS status is examined by school lunch participation, data indicates that 24.6% of those participating were considered Not Yet Demonstrating compared to 8.8% of those not participating. There was also a significant discrepancy between those screened as Consistently Demonstrating with 30.3% participating in the lunch program compared to 56.6% of non-participants (Figure 6).

On the DIBELS, the differences were even more pronounced. On the letter-naming section, 24.4% (1,375) of children receiving free or reduced lunch scored High Risk compared to only 6.7% (378) who were not participating. There is also a considerable difference between those that scored Above Average on the screen, 44.1% (2,484) versus 75.4% (4,232). Lastly, in regards to the initial sounds section, the percentage of children that received free or reduced lunch and were rated as High Risk was almost three times as high as that of those not receiving the discounted lunch program, 26.4% (1,419) in contrast to 9.7% (534). Additionally, while 32.3% (1,738) of those participating scored Above Average on the initial sounds section, 60.2% (3,300) of those not taking part in the program scored this well (Table 11).

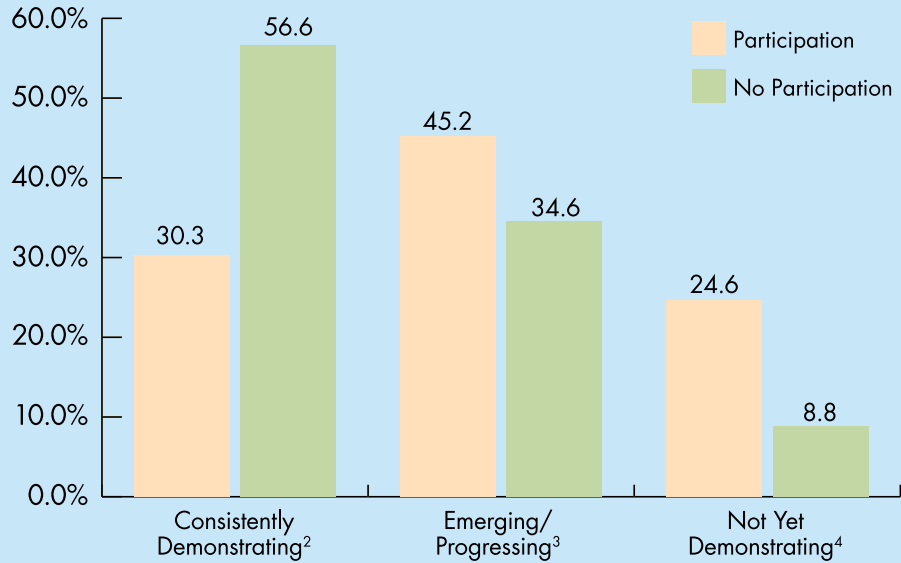
High-Risk Comparisons

An analysis of high-risk schools, those with fewer students beginning school ready to learn, is important because of its implications for later academic standings, school grades, and understanding which schools may need additional resources.

There were 119 schools that screened children using the ECHOS and DIBELS in 2006-07. Of these schools, 26 (21.8%) had 25% or more of their students scoring Not Yet Demonstrating on the ECHOS screening tool (Table 12). Seven of these schools (26.9%) were located in West Palm Beach and five (19.2%) in Lake Worth.

In 2006-07, a total of 11,543 students received a score on the DIBELS letter-naming section and 11,155 on the initial sounds section. Of the 119 schools administering the DIBELS screen, eight schools (6.7%) stood out when examining scores on the DIBELS letter naming section because 30% or more of the students screened scored High Risk. Notably, three of these schools (37.5%) were located in Lake Worth and three in Boynton Beach (37.5%). In terms of the initial sounds section, there were 15 schools (12.6%) that had 30% or more of the students scoring High Risk. Four schools (26.7%) were located in Lake Worth, and three (20%) in each of the following areas - Boynton Beach, West Palm Beach, and Delray Beach (Table 13). These schools have a higher percentage of students enrolled who are beginning their academic careers at greater risk.

Figure 6 - ECHOS¹ Status by Participation in Free or Reduced Lunch Program - Palm Beach County, 2006 (Rev. 2/06/07)



¹ Early Childhood Observation System

² Consistently Demonstrating is defined as the child demonstrated what he or she should know and be able to do at the beginning of kindergarten.

³ Emerging/Progressing is defined as the child demonstrated some of the skills he or she needs to know or be able to do at the beginning of kindergarten.

⁴ Not Yet Demonstrating is defined as appropriate skill development was not yet demonstrated during the screening.

Source: Children's Services Council created this figure using data from the School District of Palm Beach County

Table 11 - DIBELS¹ Status by Participation in Free or Reduced Lunch Programs - Palm Beach County, 2006 (Rev. 2/06/07)

| Status | Program Participation | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| | Letter Naming | | Initial Sounds | |
| | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Above average ² | 44.1% | 75.4% | 32.3% | 60.2% |
| Low risk ³ | 14.2% | 10.7% | 20.1% | 17.1% |
| Moderate risk ⁴ | 17.2% | 7.2% | 21.3% | 13.0% |
| High risk ⁵ | 24.4% | 6.7% | 26.4% | 9.7% |

Note: Missing data and duplicate cases were removed from this analysis.

¹ Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills

² Above Average is defined as at or above the 60th percentile.

³ Low Risk is defined as at grade level.

⁴ Moderate Risk is defined as below grade level and in need of additional intervention.

⁵ High Risk is defined as seriously below grade level and in need of substantial intervention.

Source: Children's Services Council created this table using data from the School District of Palm Beach County.

Table 12 - Schools with Children Scoring at the Highest Quartile of Not Yet Demonstrating (ND)¹ on the ECHOS² - Palm Beach County, 2006

| Elementary School | Location | Zip Code | Number of Students Screened | Students Scoring ND | Percent Scoring ND |
|----------------------------|--------------------|----------|-----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Central³ | | | | | |
| Barton | Lake Worth | 33460 | 91 | 32 | 35% |
| Cholee Lake | Greenacres | 33413 | 168 | 51 | 30% |
| Dr Mary McLeod Bethune | Riviera Beach | 33404 | 85 | 35 | 41% |
| Greenacres | Greenacres | 33463 | 116 | 33 | 28% |
| Grove Park | Palm Beach Gardens | 33410 | 89 | 25 | 28% |
| Highland | Lake Worth | 33460 | 106 | 50 | 47% |
| Lake Park | Lake Park | 33403 | 54 | 19 | 35% |
| Liberty Park | Greenacres | 33413 | 139 | 70 | 50% |
| Lincoln | Riviera Beach | 33404 | 62 | 36 | 58% |
| Melaleuca | West Palm Beach | 33415 | 156 | 80 | 51% |
| North Grade | Lake Worth | 33460 | 123 | 31 | 25% |
| Palmetto | West Palm Beach | 33405 | 94 | 40 | 43% |
| Palm Springs | Lake Worth | 33461 | 147 | 58 | 40% |
| Seminole Trails | West Palm Beach | 33417 | 137 | 39 | 29% |
| South Grade | Lake Worth | 33460 | 144 | 60 | 42% |
| South Olive | West Palm Beach | 33405 | 92 | 33 | 36% |
| West Gate | West Palm Beach | 33409 | 189 | 49 | 26% |
| Westward | West Palm Beach | 33401 | 90 | 28 | 31% |
| Wynnebrook | West Palm Beach | 33417 | 135 | 67 | 50% |
| South⁴ | | | | | |
| Crosspointe | Boynton Beach | 33426 | 140 | 83 | 59% |
| Forest Park | Boynton Beach | 33435 | 72 | 26 | 36% |
| Hagen Road | Boynton Beach | 33437 | 85 | 39 | 46% |
| Plumosa | Delray Beach | 33444 | 60 | 17 | 28% |
| Rolling Green | Boynton Beach | 33435 | 89 | 29 | 33% |
| Sandpiper Shores | Boca Raton | 33498 | 114 | 35 | 31% |
| West⁵ | | | | | |
| Glade View | Belle Glade | 33430 | 56 | 16 | 29% |

Note: Schools with less than 30 children screened were eliminated from the analysis.

Note: Schools shown include those with 25% or more of students scoring Not Yet Demonstrating.

Note: Boundaries were adopted from the Planning, Zoning and Building Population Disaggregation Model, 2001.

¹ Not Yet Demonstrating is defined as appropriate skill development was not yet demonstrated during the screening.

² Early Childhood Observation System

³ Central is defined as the area south of Northlake Boulevard to Lantana Road, east of the 20-mile bend and Loxahatchee Wildlife Area

⁴ South is defined as south of Lantana Road to the south county line, east of the Loxahatchee Wildlife Area

⁵ West is defined as the area west of 20-mile bend to the western county line.

Source: Florida Department of Education

Table 13 - Schools with a High Percentage of Children Scoring High Risk (HR)¹ on DIBLES² by Location and Zip Code - Palm Beach County, 2006

| Elementary School | Location | Zip Code | Number of Students Screened | Letter Naming Fluency | | Number of Students Screened | Initial Sounds Fluency | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|----------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| | | | | Students scoring HR | Percent Scoring HR | | Students scoring HR | Percent Scoring HR |
| Central³ | | | | | | | | |
| Barton | Lake Worth | 33460 | 92 | 35 | 38% | 89 | 37 | 42% |
| Clifford O. | Palm Springs | 33461 | 175 | 33 | 19% | 174 | 56 | 32% |
| Highland | Lake Worth | 33460 | 106 | 42 | 40% | 106 | 63 | 59% |
| Melaleuca | West Palm Beach | 33415 | 156 | 46 | 30% | 154 | 62 | 40% |
| Palmetto | West Palm Beach | 33405 | 97 | 25 | 26% | 97 | 41 | 42% |
| South Grade | Lake Worth | 33460 | 142 | 90 | 63% | 138 | 50 | 36% |
| West Gate | West Palm Beach | 33409 | 168 | 76 | 45% | 147 | 44 | 30% |
| South⁴ | | | | | | | | |
| Forest Park | Boynton Beach | 33435 | 71 | 30 | 42% | 71 | 22 | 31% |
| Freedom Shores | Boynton Beach | 33436 | 140 | 24 | 17% | 135 | 42 | 31% |
| Galaxy | Boynton Beach | 33435 | 78 | 23 | 30% | 78 | 26 | 33% |
| Indian Pines | Lake Worth | 33463 | 124 | 33 | 27% | 120 | 40 | 33% |
| Orchard View | Delray Beach | 33445 | 100 | 22 | 22% | 99 | 42 | 42% |
| Pine Grove | Delray Beach | 33444 | 81 | 22 | 27% | 80 | 33 | 41% |
| Rolling Green | Boynton Beach | 33435 | 89 | 34 | 38% | 89 | 24 | 27% |
| Village Academy | Delray Beach | 33444 | 78 | 9 | 12% | 78 | 28 | 36% |
| West⁵ | | | | | | | | |
| Pioneer Park | Belle Glade | 33430 | 55 | 9 | 16% | 58 | 23 | 40% |

Note: Schools with less than 30 children screened were eliminated from the analysis.

Note: Schools shown include those with 30% or more of students scoring High Risk on letter naming and/or initial sounds.

Note: Boundaries were adopted from the Planning, Zoning and Building Population Disaggregation Model, 2001.

¹ High Risk is defined as seriously below grade level and in need of substantial intervention.

² Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills

³ Central is defined as the area south of Northlake Boulevard to Lantana Road, east of the 20-mile bend and Loxahatchee Wildlife Area

⁴ South is defined as south of Lantana Road to the south county line, east of the Loxahatchee Wildlife Area

⁵ West is defined as the area west of 20-mile bend to the western county line.

Source: Florida Department of Education

Palm Beach County Key Early Care & Education Data-at-a-Glance

Population Birth - 4 (2005 Estimate)

76,759

Population of Children Birth-4 by Race/Ethnicity

47% - White non-Hispanic

24.7% - Hispanic

24.9% - Black non-Hispanic

3.4% - Other

Population Birth-4 Living in Poverty (2005 Estimate)

19.4%

Family Structure Birth-5

65.4% - Two-Parent Household

34.6% - Single-Parent Household

Subsidized Child Care Birth-5

5,118 - Enrollment (11/06)

3,568 - Waiting List (9/06)

Voluntary Pre-K Enrollment

870 - 2005/06 Summer Program

6,200 - 2006/07 School Year Program

5,708 - 2005/06 School Year Program

110 - Total Quality Improvement Sites

24 - Schools

24 - Homes

62 - Centers

School Readiness

17% - Kindergartners Not Yet
Demonstrating (ECHOS)

18% - High Risk (DIBELS) -
Initial Sounds

16% - High Risk (DIBELS) -
Letter Naming

51.7% - Kindergartners in Free and
Reduced Lunch Programs

43.7% - Free

8% - Reduced

Summary

The estimated 76,759 children from birth to four in Palm Beach County are a diverse group with 19.4% or 14,502 living in poverty. Approximately 2,780 are enrolled in subsidized child care due to their parent's work and poverty status (up to 185% of poverty level). An additional 3,458 are waiting for care. A total of 6,200 four-year-olds are enrolled in the school year Voluntary Pre-K Program. The CSC Quality Improvement System aims to improve child care and pre-k environments and the Comprehensive Services Program identifies at-risk children in child care programs with the ultimate goal of helping children be ready for school. HIPYP and Parenting Smart Babies

programs work with parents in the home with the same end goal.

School Readiness data point to the convergence of poverty, language, and racial and ethnic disparities contributing to Palm Beach County's 17% Not Yet Demonstrating readiness on the ECHOS - the highest percent among seven urban counties. These factors are also at play in the 26 schools in Palm Beach County with 25% or more of their kindergarten students Not Yet Demonstrating readiness.

Continued targeted focus by the community on our youngest children is needed to improve our school readiness scores and assure each child's potential.

Early Care and Education: Overview

Positive Outcomes

DIBELS (Letter Naming)






DIBELS (Initial Sounds)



Negative Outcomes

Racial and Ethnic Disparities



-  Indicator data shows improvement over the past year.
-  Indicator data shows no change over the past year.
-  The indicator data shows a decrease in improvement over the past year.

References

Karoly, L.A. Kilburn, M.R., Cannon, J.S. (2005). Early childhood interventions: proven results, future promise. Rand Corporation. Online: http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND_MG341.pdf



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