



FSSA News Release

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Purdue University study shows On My Way Pre-K children outperform peers well into elementary school

University of Chicago kindergarten readiness study also shows positive results

INDIANAPOLIS—The Indiana Family and Social Services Administration today released the results of two studies that show children who attend On My Way Pre-K are better prepared for school and that the benefits continue well into elementary school.

“The studies show that Indiana’s investment in high-quality early education for the children of lower-income families is helping our youngest learners achieve at their greatest potential for years to come,” said Gov. Eric J. Holcomb. “Giving children a good start on their education pathway delivers a more well-prepared student and ultimately a ready to go workforce, both key elements to our state’s future growth and opportunity.”

The first study released today by FSSA is a multi-year longitudinal study demonstrating that children who attend the On My Way Pre-K program have stronger school readiness, language and literacy skills than their peers with similar family incomes who attend lower quality childcare or prekindergarten programs. On My Way Pre-K allows 4-year-old children of low-income families to attend high-quality early education programs for a year before entering kindergarten. The study was conducted by Purdue University researchers from the Center for Early Learning. The study revealed that the pattern of On My Way Pre-K children outperforming their peers continued through the third and fourth grades, as measured in standardized Math and English/Language Arts scores.

Additionally, On My Way Pre-K children from the 2020-2021 school year matched up positively compared to national norms established for all prekindergarten children in the first annual Kindergarten Readiness Indicators assessment, conducted by the University of Chicago.

Results of both the Purdue study and the University of Chicago study [are available here](#).

Purdue University longitudinal study results

Purdue researchers followed a sample of 376 children who attended an On My Way Pre-K program rated as [Level 3 or 4 on PATHS to Quality](#) (Indiana’s voluntary early education quality rating and improvement system) and a control cohort of 182 children who attended comparable prekindergarten

programs that were either not participating in PATHS to Quality or were rated Level 1. Researchers examined whether children who attended On My Way Pre-K gained more skills than those in comparison programs. Indeed, On My Way Pre-K children performed better than comparison children on general school readiness skills, such as identifying shapes, colors and numbers and language and literacy skills in kindergarten. The On My Way Pre-K students also tended to have higher performance on ILEARN English/Language Arts tests than the comparison children in grades 3 and 4.

“One of the unique features of On My Way Pre-K is that it includes programs that are operated in homes, centers, schools and religious settings,” said Nicole Norvell, director of FSSA’s Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning. “The children in the study attending various program types had similar outcomes, supporting the concept of a mixed delivery design of early learning, allowing families to choose what is best for their children.”

Kindergarten Readiness Indicators assessment results

The Kindergarten Readiness Indicators assessment was implemented for the first time in On My Way Pre-K classrooms statewide in the spring of the 2020-2021 school year. This assessment measures oral language, literacy and math skills prior to kindergarten entry. Researchers at the University of Chicago analyzed KRI data from 1,608 students of the 2,476 students enrolled in On My Way Pre-K programs across the state of Indiana in the spring of 2021 and compared their scores to national norms established for higher-income children. On average, On My Way Pre-K children scored at or above national target levels on 29% of the language and literacy skills and 40% of the math skills that were reviewed in the kindergarten readiness indicators assessment.

About On My Way Pre-K

On My Way Pre-K awards grants to 4-year-old children from low-income families so that they may have access to a high-quality pre-K program the year before they begin kindergarten. Families who receive a grant may use the grant at any approved On My Way Pre-K program throughout the state.

Approved On My Way Pre-K programs may be in a public or private school, licensed childcare center, licensed home or registered ministry as long as that program meets the quality requirements and is registered as an On My Way Pre-K Provider. Families may choose from a program that is full-day or part-day, as well as from programs that end with the school year or continue through the summer.

More than 15,000 Hoosier children have attended pre-K through a grant from the On My Way Pre-K program since it began in 2015. The program, which started as a five-county pilot and then expanded to 20 counties in 2017, became a statewide program in 2019.

News Media Contact:

Name: Marni Lemons

Phone: 317-407-3858

Email: Marni.Lemons@fssa.IN.gov