Cincinnati preschool promise

Expanding Access to Quality Preschool

2025-2026 Annual Report

Letter From Leadership

Dear Cincinnati Preschool Promise Family,

As we celebrate another successful year of keeping the promise — and as we near our 10th anniversary — we are reminded of the generosity, commitment and belief that have made this journey possible.

For nearly a decade, Cincinnati Preschool Promise has worked alongside families, preschool providers, educators, community partners, supporters and advocates to expand access to high-quality early learning for Cincinnati's youngest students. Thank you may seem like too small a phrase to express our gratitude, yet it powerfully captures what we feel.

Your gifts of time, resources, expertise and encouragement have strengthened the Promise. Every contribution, whether big or small, has helped create more opportunities for children to learn, grow and enter kindergarten ready to thrive.

As you read through this annual report, we invite you to see yourself in these pages. The stories, milestones and accomplishments reflect a community coming together to make a difference. They represent the many people who have opened doors, supported educators, invested in preschools, encouraged families and championed the importance of early learning.

We could not do this work as expansively or as effectively without you.

Together, we have accomplished so much — and there is still more work to do. As we look ahead, we are grateful to have you by our side as we continue to keep the Promise to Cincinnati's children and families.

With gratitude,

Micah Kamrass
Chair, Board of Managers

Chara Fisher Jackson
Executive Director & CEO

Board of Managers

Micah Kamrass, Chair
Anthony Hobson
Carolyn Jones
Cheryl Rose
Christopher Bennett
Glen Calhoun
Jennifer L. Myree
Kristi Phillips
Marcia Futel
Margaret Hulbert
Pamela Bowers
Ross Meyer
Sallie Westheimer
Terri C. England
Traci Poellnitz
Valicia Johnson
Verline Dotson

Our Story

Our Mission

Cincinnati Preschool Promise ensures families have equitable access to high-quality preschool so every Cincinnati child is prepared for kindergarten.

The Cincinnati Preschool Promise strives to provide our youngest students with the best start to school and life. We work to expand equitable access to high-quality preschool by:

Offering preschool tuition assistance to families who need it most.

Increasing the number of quality preschool seats in Cincinnati.

Partnering with community preschools to improve quality.

Supporting recruitment, retention, and wage parity for early childhood education workforce.

By age 5, children's brains are already 90% developed. This means strong, early learning experiences build a strong foundation for their futures. Research shows children who attend high-quality preschool are more likely to enter kindergarten prepared to learn, graduate from high school and thrive in college and life. The Cincinnati Preschool Promise partners with the Cincinnati Public School District to provide a strong start for children.

This work is possible thanks to an investment from taxpayers, who approved Cincinnati Public School levies in 2016, 2020, and 2025. Each levy includes $33 million per year to strengthen K-12 education and $15 million per year to expand access to quality preschool. The Cincinnati Preschool Promise fills the gaps left by other local, state, federal and private dollars. The Cincinnati Preschool Promise partners with the Cincinnati Public School District to create an opportunity for all of Cincinnati's children.

Making a Difference

Finding His Own Place to Shine

Shirley Johnson & Genero Gilliam

For Genaro Gilliam, preschool is more than a place to learn—it's where he is discovering his voice. Genaro has attended a CPP preschool as a three and four-year old, following in the footsteps of his five older brothers. He loves taking part in school activities, especially when he can share them with his younger sister. His mother, Shirley Johnson, has watched him grow in confidence and ability. CPP tuition support has eased the family's financial burden, making preschool possible and giving Genaro space to learn, build friendships and grow beyond the classroom.

CPP Preschooler

Creating a Stable Learning Environment

Kevin & Karson DeWalt

Kevin DeWalt knows the power of the Promise in empowering families in putting their children in safe, supportive learning environments. His son, Karson, is a curious child who likes to learn new things. "With tuition assistance and parental support from Cincinnati Preschool Promise, we were able to provide a stable learning environment for Karson when he was ready to move from preschool to a Cincinnati Public School kindergarten class. I am appreciative of the support which has enabled us to see our son flourish and progress with each learning opportunity. The assistance we received also enabled us to select a preschool that challenged my son academically and provided a strong foundation for future learning." Karson attends CPS' Clifton Fairview German School.

CPP to Kindergarten

When the Unthinkable Happens

Antonio & Khiari Morrison

When Antonio Morrison lost his wife, he and his young son, Khiari, were devastated. Suddenly, Antonio was grieving while navigating life as a single parent and making important decisions about his son's future. During this difficult time, Cincinnati Preschool Promise stepped in. CPP helped Antonio find the right preschool for Khiari and provided tuition assistance, while referring Antonio to resources he could count on when he was struggling emotionally. Today, Khiari is thriving. "I'm thankful Cincinnati Preschool Promise had resources I could count on," Antonio says. "Thanks to their referrals, my son and I are prepared for whatever comes next." Khiari attends Cincinnati Technology Academy.

CPP to Kindergarten

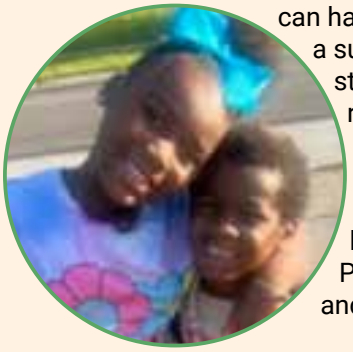
Children and Families

The Promise Continues

CPP 2nd Grader

Deonna Davis

For Deonna Davis, preschool was more than the beginning of her educational journey—it was a family tradition. Her dad attended Ms. Robyn Perkins' preschool, Nanny's Daycare, as a child, where she taught him. Years later, he returned to the same preschool with his daughter, Deonna so that she could learn with Ms. Robyn as her teacher, too. It was a meaningful connection across generations—and a special reminder of the lasting impact a caring educator can have on a family. With a strong preschool foundation, Deonna made a successful transition to elementary school. Now in second grade, she states, "I enjoy learning new things with my friends — especially math and reading." Her confidence shows how early education nurtures a love for learning and opens doors for future success. Deonna's story shows that the impact of early education doesn't end with preschool. It lives on in the confidence she carries into each new classroom and in the bond shared across generations. From one generation to the next, the Promise continues. What began with her dad continues through Deonna and now her younger brother, Deontre.



A Start That Lasts

Amyra Arnold & Tiana Leary

CPP 6th Grader

Amyra Arnold has been learning and building confidence at Little Treehouse of Knowledge Preschool since age three. Now a sixth grader at Cincinnati College Preparatory Academy, she is an A/B student who loves science. For Amyra's mother, Tiana Leary, Cincinnati Preschool Promise made that strong start possible. All four of her children attended Little Treehouse of Knowledge for preschool, including her youngest, who is five and still learning there. For the Leary family, CPP Tuition Assistance helped make early learning experiences possible for all four children. And for Amyra, her mother says the investment continues to show — Amyra entered her sixth grade classes at Cincinnati College Preparatory Academy ready and eager to learn. "Her strong early learning experiences have given her greater confidence, stronger social-emotional skills, and a growing ability to motivate herself and take ownership of her learning and behavior."

Learn more about CPP!

Stories of Impact: Preschools

Red Brick Childcare

Home-Based Preschool

"As the owner and administrator of Red Brick Childcare, I am grateful for the ways Cincinnati Preschool Promise has invested in me—not just as a Provider, but as an educator, business owner, and advocate for children and families. CPP supports my continued growth. Most recently, it enabled me to attend the 2026 National Association for Family Child Care Conference in Chicago, where I gained ideas and strategies I could bring back to my program. That is the Power of the Promise: providing access to a strong learning environment to help children build the skills and confidence they need for kindergarten and beyond. Watching Red Brick children succeed in school—and knowing I helped prepare them—is one of the most rewarding parts of my work." — Tinia Holmes, Owner and Administrator

Growing With the Promise

QI to TA Preschool

For Peggy Glasper, joining the Cincinnati Preschool Promise network marked the beginning of a journey fueled by determination, learning and a deep love for the children she calls "the small ones." Peggy entered the CPP network as a Quality Improvement Provider. With coaching and support, she navigated new regulations, strengthened her program and progressed to become a high-quality, tuition-assisted preschool. CPP has helped Peggy access training, supplies and professional development while building connections with fellow providers. Through the provider network, she shares ideas, lesson plans and support with other educators. Teacher Promise Grants have also helped her provide teacher incentives, purchase classroom materials and create special experiences for children and families. Peggy's growth reflects the Power of the Promise: with coaching, resources and a strong provider community, educators can strengthen their programs and create better opportunities for children and families.

Romaro Academies

Parochial Preschool

"For many of our families, preschool would not be an option without CPP tuition assistance, as they work to cover basic needs like food and housing. CPP supports 26 of our 42 preschool scholars across both Romero Academies campuses, making preschool possible and giving our youngest learners a strong start. We see that strong foundations carry into kindergarten, where more than 80% of our preschool scholars enter ahead of grade level. We are deeply grateful to CPP for investing in our scholars and helping our families give their children this start." — Emily Gilbride Beck, Executive Director | Romero Academies

Stories of Impact: Educators

Marlissa Brown

Teacher Promise Grant

For more than 24 years, Marlissa Brown has poured her heart into early childhood education. She can't imagine doing anything else—and the Teacher Promise Grant (TPG) has helped make that passion possible. When unexpected car trouble and costly repairs threatened to disrupt her family's daily life and her ability to work at her preschool, Marlissa turned to TPG. The added financial support helped her create a budget, purchase a reliable car and keep her three children connected to school and after-school activities — all while continuing to invest in her preschool classroom at Nanny's Multi-Level Learning Center. "TPG kept my family and me afloat for the last two years," Marlissa says. "The grant process keeps you accountable for maintaining your training, staying on top of your hours while continuing to strive to be a better teacher." For Marlissa, TPG is more than financial assistance. It is support that helps educators stay in the profession they love, provide for their families and keep showing up for the children who count on them.

Staff Support Fund

Love & Grow Education Services

For Love & Grow Education Services, quality begins with the people in the classroom. After joining Cincinnati Preschool Promise's Quality Improvement Network, the program discovered the Staff Support Fund (SSF) — an opportunity designed to help QI Providers strengthen their teams as they work toward high-quality SUTQ ratings. For the past two years, Love & Grow has used SSF funding to supplement staff wages. "SSF funding helped take the stress off our program administration," the program shared. "CPP's additional financial support helped us maintain four teachers over the last two years." We are grateful for the extra support provided by the Cincinnati Preschool Promise.

Thank you to the CPP Community Provider Network. Visit our website to see the 2025-2026 Network Members.

Partnerships

Cincinnati State Technical and Community College

"Cincinnati State's Early Childhood Education Program is honored to partner with Cincinnati Preschool Promise. Through the Teacher Completion Grant, CPP provides critical financial support while helping aspiring educators overcome the barriers that can prevent them from completing credentials and degrees. This investment demonstrates that strengthening the early childhood workforce requires more than encouraging higher education—it requires helping educators reach the finish line. CPP also helps us break down silos, better understand workforce needs, and strengthen pathways into and through higher education. Under Chara Fischer-Jackson's leadership, CPP continues to advance this collaborative approach while drawing national attention to Cincinnati's progress. Cincinnati State is proud to be part of a model that brings together public investment, early childhood providers, higher education, and community partners to strengthen access, quality, and workforce development—and to see firsthand the difference it makes for our students and the children, families, and communities they will serve." — Kelly Hubbard, M.A.Ed. Professor & Program Chair | Early Childhood Education

Southwest Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children (SWOAEYC)

SWOAEYC is a state affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children with a mission to promote high-quality early learning for all children, birth through age 8, by connecting practice, policy, and research. SWOAEYC is a membership organization that advances a diverse, dynamic early childhood profession and supports all who care for, educate, and work on behalf of young children. CPP partners with SWOAEYC by offering membership scholarships, promoting professional development opportunities, and celebrating the annual Week of the Young Child. CPP is proud to have CPP's Director of Quality Education join SWOAEYC's Governing Board.

Greater Cincinnati Microenterprise Initiative (GCMI)

CPP's Business Accelerator was facilitated by the GCMI and LISC Greater Cincinnati. GCMI offered hands-on learning sessions and coaching to home-based preschools to help them develop a small-business strategy. LISC provided grants to our early education entrepreneurs to help them implement business practices focused on marketing to increase enrollment, facility improvements, fiscal management and technology integration and optimization. Together we provided foundational support to help CPP's community providers network sustain and grow their current preschool sites. *"When GCMI had the opportunity to partner with the Cincinnati Preschool Promise to support self-employed childcare providers and their businesses, we welcomed the opportunity. It is rewarding to work alongside a partner who shares our commitment to strengthening individuals, businesses and communities. Helping childcare business owners connect with resources that support stability, growth and opportunity is essential. Childcare is a cornerstone of a thriving community and a strong economic foundation. We are proud to partner with Cincinnati Preschool Promise. and contribute to work that supports childcare providers and the families and communities they serve."* — Willie Hill, Executive Director

Partnerships

Union Savings Bank | Guardian Savings Bank
African American Chamber of Commerce

"For more than six years, Union Savings Bank has proudly partnered with the African American Chamber of Commerce and Cincinnati Preschool Promise to provide 900 backpacks each year to local preschoolers. This ongoing commitment helps ensure that children begin the school year equipped with the supplies they need to learn, grow, and thrive. We are honored to support Cincinnati Preschool Promise and its mission to strengthen early childhood education and create brighter futures for children and families throughout our community." — Keith Borders, Chief Corporate Responsibility Officer | Vice President of Community Development

Greater Cincinnati Foundation – Better Together Fund

Greater Cincinnati Foundation (GCF), in collaboration with bi3 Fund, BT RISE, Interact for Health, and the United Way of Greater Cincinnati, created the Better Together Fund to strengthen nonprofit capacity and develop solutions to enhance nonprofit effectiveness, encourage collaboration, and support long-term sustainability. CPP is among 34 grantees in the 2026 cycle who benefitted from tailored consulting and capacity-building services from trusted experts who help strengthen business models, improve operations, and build long-term strategic plans. CPP participated in Revjen's Fuelworks series as the first step in refreshing our strategic direction after a decade of learning.

Plante Moran

"We are proud to support Cincinnati Preschool Promise and its mission to expand access to high-quality early childhood education. Investing in our youngest learners helps build a stronger future for families, our workforce, and our community. We value our partnership with CPP and appreciate the meaningful impact they are making in preparing the next generation for lifelong success."
— Amber D. Mitchell, CPA | Partner | Financial Services and Healthcare

Make a Gift

Partnerships

Ascension Strategies

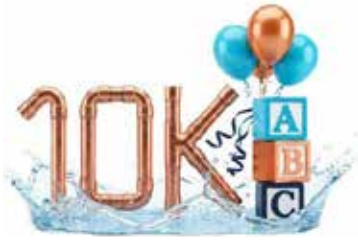
Ascension Strategies' mission is to collaborate with individuals, companies, and organizations to embrace change as opportunities for leadership growth and transformation. They have guided CPP through an intentional, value-based process to refresh our strategic direction and develop a blueprint that will guide strategic planning over the next year as we celebrate our 10th Anniversary.

Queen City Book Bank

We are proud to have Queen City Book Bank as our literacy partner. This year QCBB celebrated a 40-year legacy of walking alongside families to build positive reading habits, joy and lifelong skills that begins with putting a book in the hands of children. QCBB has donated more than 1,200 books in support of CPP's Back to School Jam, Smart Start Backpacks, Provider Power Packs, and literacy-focused professional development sessions. Our collaboration reflects QCBB's motto in action: "We are not just improving literacy, we are elevating it as a shared community priority."

Greater Cincinnati Water Works

Greater Cincinnati Water Works celebrated a milestone this year by replacing more than 10,000 lead lines, including more than 100 early learning sites in Cincinnati. In children under age six, lead can cause lower IQ and behavioral issues. The Lead Service Line Replacement Program uses a special treatment to coat the interior of service lines to minimize the risk of lead leaching into the water. CPP partnered with CWW to ensure clean, safe water at CPP Community Preschools.



Partnerships

The Early Care and Education Implementation Working Group

The New Practice Lab at New America listens deeply to families to understand what they really need to thrive. Grounded in their voices, the Lab works to improve policy design and public service delivery so families with young children can benefit from things like tax credits, paid family and medical leave, and early care and education. To understand the successes and challenges of current programs, the Lab convenes the Early Care and Education Implementation Working Group, currently composed of twenty member locations across the United States. Keeping the focus on local implementation and delivery helps members share what is working and what isn't at the point of need. This helps them carry out their own work, inspires conversations about good implementation for future planning, and helps shape future ECE policy to be more implementation-oriented. The Cincinnati Preschool Promise has been a longtime member and a leader of the working group, participating both as peer learners and teachers, and through the strategic guidance of Chara Fisher Jackson on the steering committee.

New America

K-Ready Alliance Ohio

The members of the K-Ready Alliance represent communities throughout Ohio who have made significant investments of voter-approved and philanthropic dollars to support early learning opportunities. The Alliance convenes quarterly to share best practices, meet with statewide leaders, and strategize on advancing our shared goal of giving each child a strong foundation and the best start so they are ready for kindergarten and thrive.

Cincinnati preschool promise
Expanding Access to Quality Preschool

HOPE TOLEDO

Invest in Children UPK

GREATER AKRON'S UNIFIED EARLY LEARNING SYSTEM

PRE4CLE

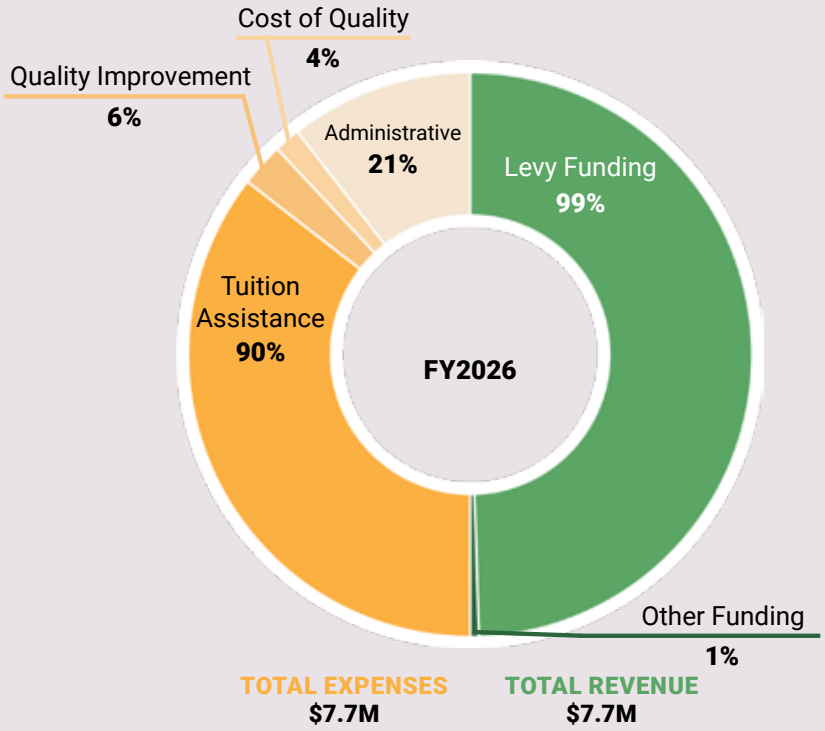
preschool PROMISE
because the first 5 years matter

FR5 Future Ready Five
READY to THRIVE

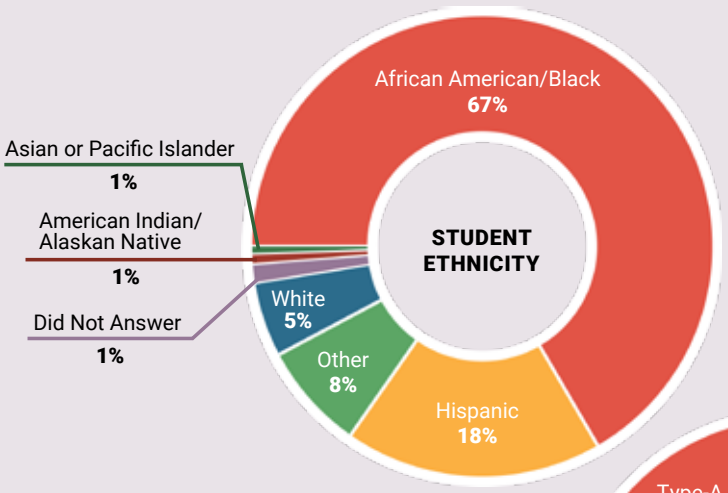
Great Start FOR GREAT FUTURES

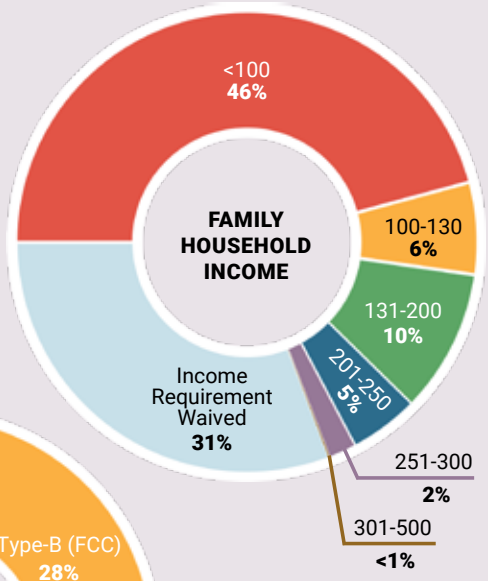
Journey to 5 • Licking County

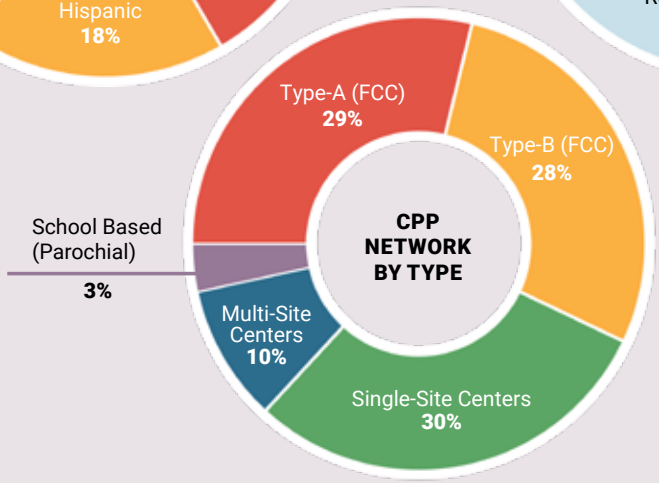
Financials & Demographics



CPP PROVIDER, FAMILY AND STUDENT SNAPSHOT







Staff

CHARA FISHER JACKSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & CEO

KENETRA MATHIS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

HÉCTOR POLANCO
FINANCE DIRECTOR

FLORENCE MALONE CRUMP
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

AMBER MITCHELL
OUTREACH AND ENROLLMENT
PARTICIPANT SPECIALIST

SYDNEY YISRAEL
TUITION ASSITANCE
PROVIDER COORDINATOR

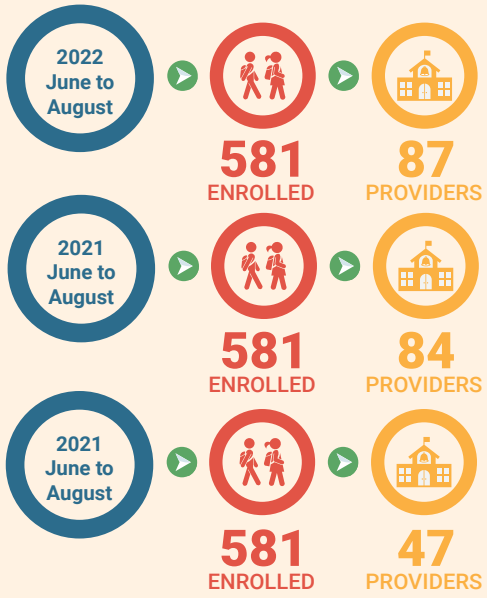
BRITTNII PINA
DIRECTOR OF QUALITY EDUCATION

LINDSEY DIBLASI
PROVIDER SPECIALIST

Expanding Access

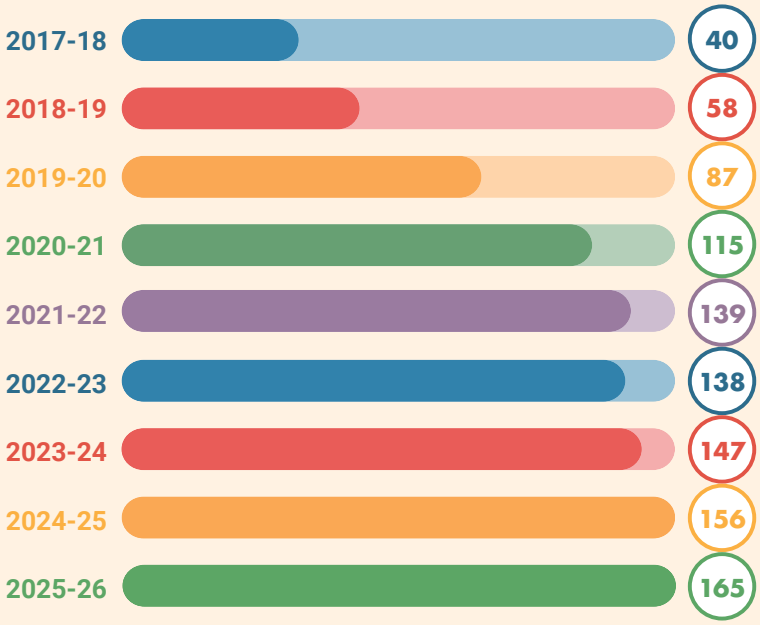
Cincinnati Preschool Promise has supported over 15,656 preschoolers.

EXTENDED LEARNING SESSION



COMMUNITY PROVIDERS PARTICIPATING IN TUITION ASSISTANCE

1,047



PRESCHOOLERS SERVED AT COMMUNITY PROVIDERS

8,365

PRESCHOOLERS SERVED AT CINCINNATI PUBLIC SCHOOLS

7,291

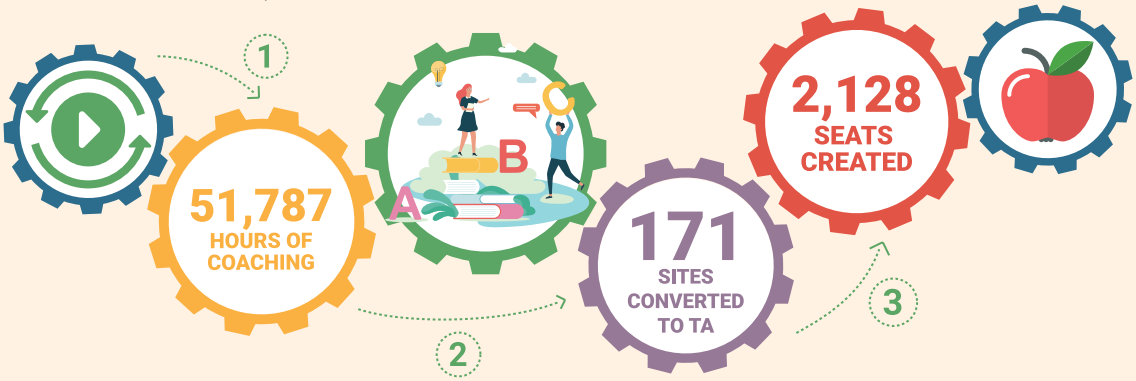
Building Partnerships

We expand **ACCESS** to affordable quality preschool for Cincinnati children and families.

We **BUILD** partnerships with Providers to increase high-quality programs

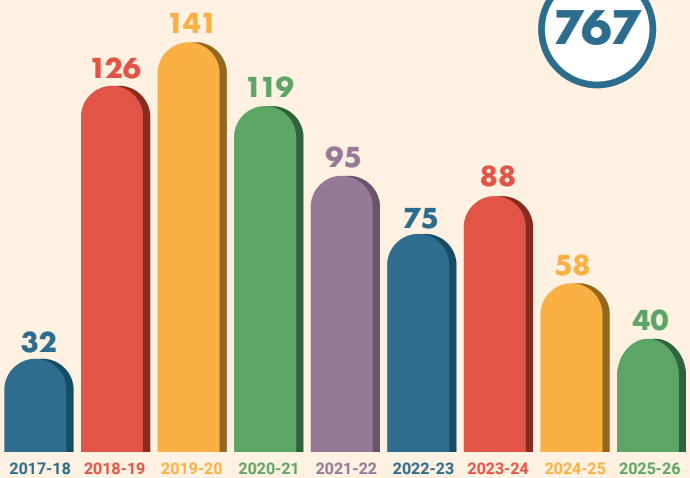
We **CONTRIBUTE** to an equitable early childhood community to sustain high-quality programs and results.

MOVING TO HIGH-QUALITY



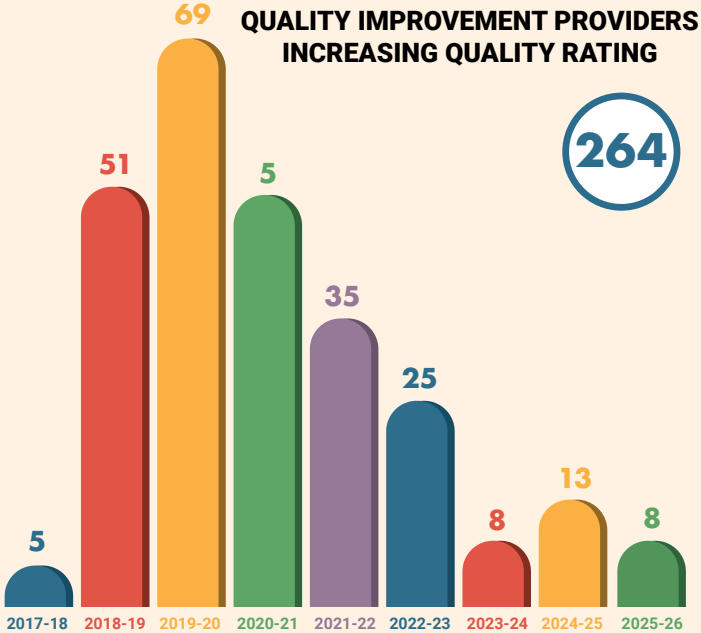
PROVIDERS IN QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

767



QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROVIDERS INCREASING QUALITY RATING

264



Sustaining Quality

=

Preschoolers ready for kindergarten.

63% to 78% of preschoolers

who received Tuition Assistance through Cincinnati Preschool Promise showed up for kindergarten ready to learn throughout our levy lifecycles.

As measured by Ohio's Kindergarten Readiness Assessments

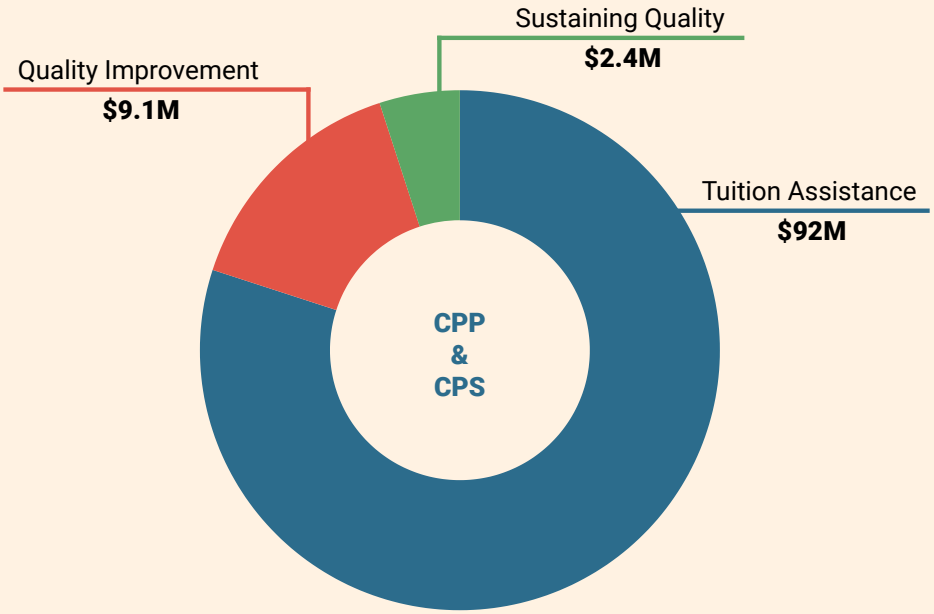
435

TEACHER PROMISE GRANTS AWARDED

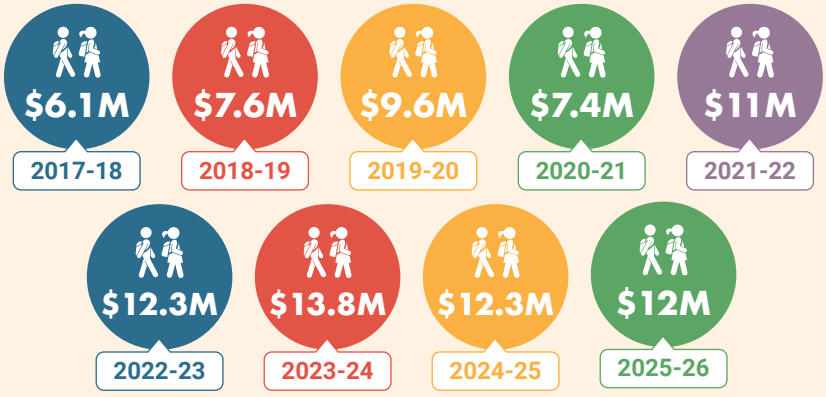
115

STAFF SUPPORT FUND SITES

DIRECT PROGRAM SPENDING



TUITION ASSISTANCE SPEND



2026 Our Impact

COMMUNITY PROVIDER NETWORK

- **1,131** Students received Tuition Assistance
- Preschoolers served **2,152**
- **165** Tuition Assistance preschools
- Attendance rate **89%**
- **8** Preschools reached high-quality
- Invested in Tuition Assistance **$7M**
- **33** Quality Improvement Preschools
- High-Quality Seats Created **144**
- **6** Staff Support Fund Sites
- Teacher Promise Grants Awarded **56**

With Tuition Assistance, Cincinnati Preschool Promise, in partnership with Cincinnati Public Schools, increased the odds of demonstrating readiness on the KRA-R by

25.2%

and the odds of being on track for language and literacy by

58%

To read the Year 9 Evaluation by INNOVATIONS, visit our website **cincy-promise.org**.

Reports & Resources

We know high-quality preschool works. The opportunity we have now is to build on what we've learned – and turn that knowledge into lasting change. Cincinnati Preschool Promise draws on nearly a decade of experience, along with local and national research, to help shape an early education ecosystem that is accessible, affordable, equitable, and sustainable. Explore the resources that inform our work.

First Five Years Fund (FFYF)

First Five Years Fund builds bipartisan support for quality child care and early learning programs at the federal level. We rely on their public policy insights, fact sheets and Ohio-specific data to inform our work. The FFYF First Look is a daily report on the latest child care and early learning new from accorss they country.

Stay informed and subscribe to First Look

Bipartisan Policy Center

The Bipartisan Policy Center is a nationally respected think tank driving bipartisan solutions for children, education, workforce, paid family leave, the economy. BPC's history is defined by a commitment to dialogue, data, and results. BPC issues short, fact-based policy primers making complex policy clear, accessible, and useful. Recent briefs address the Child Care Modernization Act and Paid Family Leave.

Explore the Bipartisan Policy Center Policy Briefs

The Morning Meeting

Groundwork Ohio mobilizes supporters, engages policymakers, and grows expertise and impact through The Morning Meeting, a weekly online gathering of champions for young children held on Thursdays from 9:30 – 10:00 a.m. Grab your favorite morning beverage and start your day with the Groundwork Ohio team.

Register for The Morning Meeting and view past recordings.

Reports & Resources

Explore the Insights to Actions Briefs

New America

New America is a think tank focused on empowering policymakers and changemakers to turn bold ideas into real solutions for people, families, and communities in the United States and worldwide. New America's Thriving Families team works to strengthen the systems that support the early care and education of the nation's youngest children. The Early and Elementary Education Policy team works to ensure all children have access to high-quality early learning opportunities from birth through third grade. The team supports a bold agenda that prioritizes high-quality opportunities for all, empowers well-prepared and fairly compensated educators to do their best work, and supports family well-being.

Through a partnership with the Zaentz Early Education Initiative at Harvard Graduate School of Education, New America issued a series of briefs surfacing promising strategies from leaders across the country: the Insights to Action series. This series highlights innovative ideas, fuels evidence-based decision-making, and accelerates deeper, more sustained systems-building.

Key issue areas include workforce, dedicated funding streams, infrastructure and data systems, subsidy cost estimation, and facility and physical space expansion. Recent briefs include:

- Built to Last: How Leaders Are Creating Sustainable Early Childhood Funding
- Designing for a Durable Workforce: State and City Strategies to Recruit, Support & Retain Early Educators
- Count What Matters: Building Data Infrastructure for Early Childhood Systems
- Beyond Market Rates: How States and Cities Are Estimating the True Cost of Quality Care

Explore BCDI's Reports, Toolkits, Directories and Fellowship Opportunities.

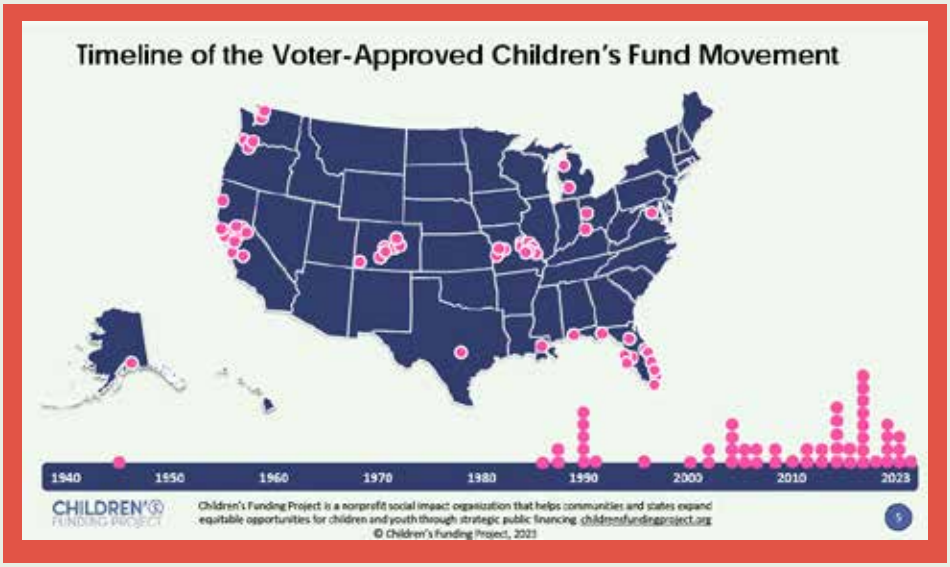
Black Child Development Institute Ohio

The Black Child Development Institute – Ohio (BCDI Ohio) is a statewide affiliate of the National Black Child Development Institute, dedicated to advancing the well-being of Black and Brown children and families through education, advocacy, and culturally grounded community engagement. Rooted in a commitment to equity and excellence, BCDI Ohio works to eliminate systemic barriers that impact children's learning, development, and long-term success. The organization partners with families, educators, early childhood providers, and community institutions to strengthen the ecosystems that shape a child's earliest experiences and lifelong outcomes. BCDI Ohio delivers programs and initiatives that promote early literacy, family engagement, culturally responsive teaching, and policy awareness. Through professional development, community partnerships, and evidence-informed resources, the organization equips adults who serve Black children with the tools, knowledge, and support needed to create affirming, high-quality learning environments.

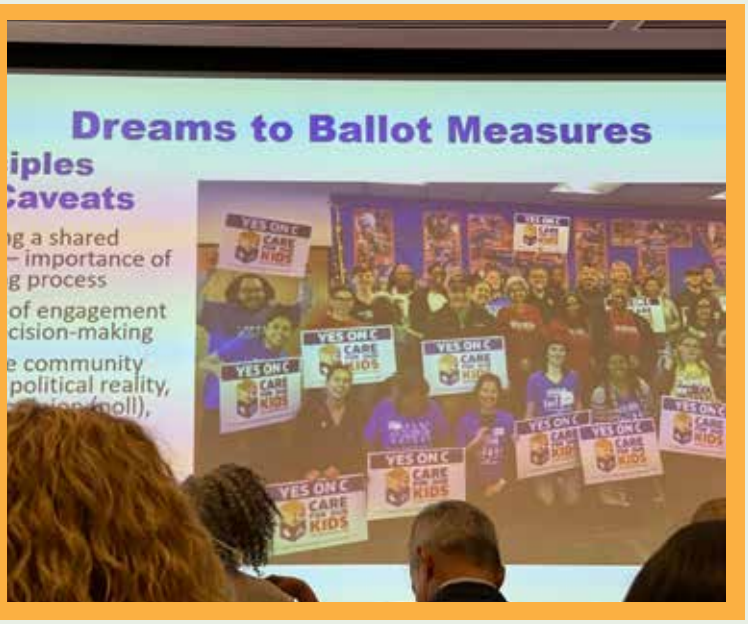
Reports & Resources

Children's Funding Project

Children's Funding Project (CFP) is a nonprofit social impact organization that helps communities, states, Native nations and national partners expand equitable opportunities for children and youth through strategic public financing. Through collective action, CFP envisions a nation where all children and youth thrive because all communities maintain equitable, coordinated, and sustainable funding for comprehensive programs and services. Cincinnati Preschool Promise is a member of CFP's Community of Practice, connecting local leaders committed to supporting children and youth—from birth to young adulthood. More than 50 local initiatives across the country benefit from CFP's key initiatives that include the following:



- Strategic Public Financing to "help state, community, and Native leaders assess their current spending, assign a cost to their goals and policy priorities for children and youth, and identify ways to cover those costs in strategic and sustainable ways."
- Fiscal Mapping to "document and analyze the various sources of funding that support programs for children in a state, city, county, or Native nation, and coach local leaders on how to collect, sustain, and use fiscal map data in their communities."
- Cost Analysis and Modeling to "work with local leaders to estimate how much money they need to



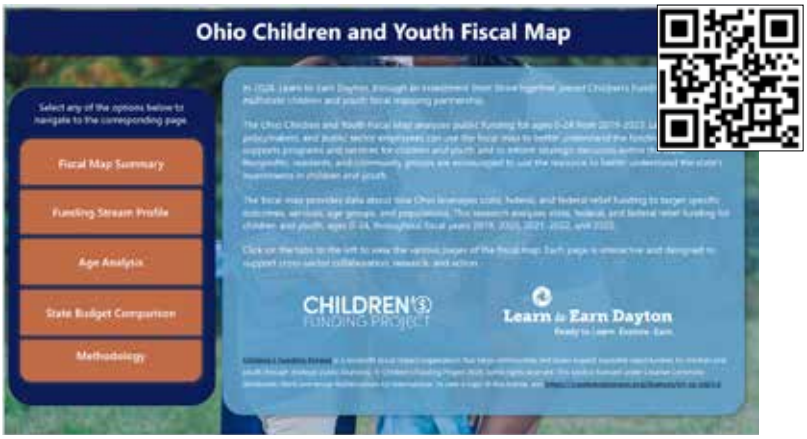
Explore case studies of voter-approved children's funds nationwide, including how communities planned, built support for and administered dedicated funding.

Reports & Resources

achieve their goals for kids and to build the skills, knowledge, and resources they need to grow and sustain their cost modeling expertise."

- Sourcing Additional Funding "to help leaders determine which funding options are viable in their unique context by researching local taxing authority, analyzing options for state-level revenue, and exploring common and creative funding sources currently used to support children and youth."
- Voter-Approved Children's Funds to "support dozens of state and local teams nationwide in establishing and maintaining voter-approved children's funds—state or local tax revenue that voters dedicate exclusively to children and youth services via a ballot measure." CPP is part of the Children's Funding Project's Community of Practice.
- Native Children's Funding Project to "work alongside Native nations, Tribal leaders, and advocates to align public funding with Tribal sovereignty, strengthen Tribal decision-making, close funding gaps, and build funding systems rooted in cultural values."

Explore the Ohio's Children and Youth Fiscal Map, developed with Learn to Earn Dayton, which analyzes public funding for children and youth ages 0-24 from 2019-2023.



"As a leader in Children's Funding Project's voter-approved children's funds community of practice, CPP has inspired others across the nation to approach early childhood education with a bold commitment to equity. Their work is also growing the coalition for more local early childhood funds in Ohio. This kind of leadership strengthens our national community of practice and shows how local dedicated funding can transform child outcomes for generations to come."
— Kenny Francis, Director | Coaching and Capacity Building

Building Bright Futures for Children

Cincinnati preschool Promise
Expanding Access to Quality Preschool

Cincinnati Preschool Promise Evaluation Summary: 2025-26

Cincinnati Preschool Promise (CPP) is committed to ensuring children have equitable access to high-quality preschool, preparing them for kindergarten and beyond. CPP provides Tuition Assistance (TA) to eligible 3- and 4- year old children to attend high-quality community-based providers or public preschools within the Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) district boundary. The findings shown in this 2025-26 evaluation summary demonstrate how CPP's investments continue to expand access to high-quality preschool and support positive outcomes for children. Results related to preschooler progress and kindergarten readiness include TA recipients enrolled in both community-based and CPS preschools. All other results represent community-based participants. The full report provides additional findings, detailed descriptions of CPP programs, and information about the evaluation methods used to assess CPP's impact on children, families, Providers, and the broader Cincinnati community. The evaluation was conducted by *INNOVATIONS* in Community Research and Program Evaluation at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, CPP's independent external evaluator.

CPP TUITION ASSISTED PRESCHOOLERS ARE LEARNING, GROWING, AND THRIVING

Preschool Enrollment

1,131 preschoolers received CPP TA to attend high-quality preschool

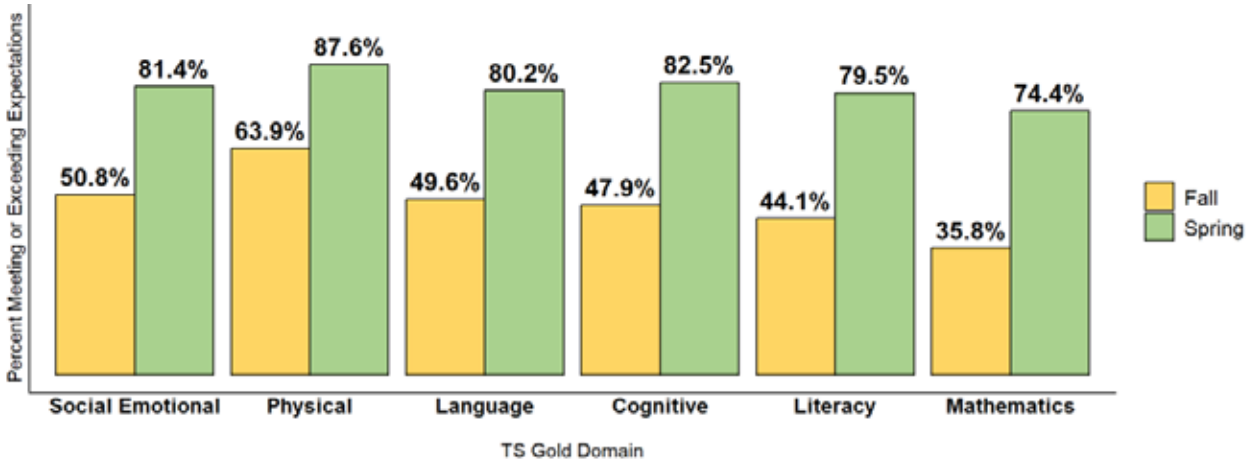
Preschool Attendance Rate

89.3% average attendance rate

A 5.9 point increase since 2017

By Spring 2026: More Preschoolers were Meeting or Exceeding Expectations for Their Age and Strengthening Their Readiness for Kindergarten

Preschooler Gains on the Teaching Strategies (TS) GOLD Assessment (N=908)

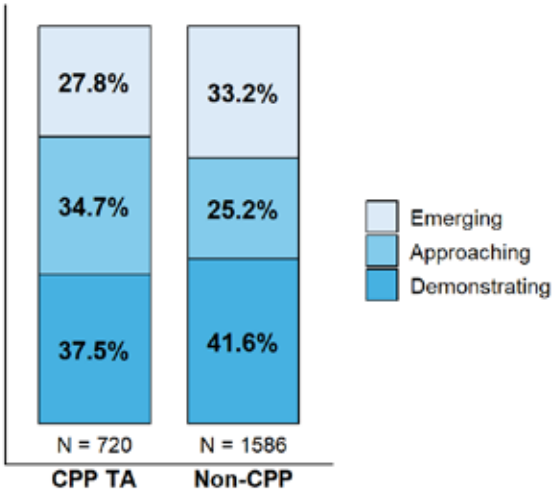


CPP TUITION ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS SHOW GREATER KINDERGARTEN READINESS

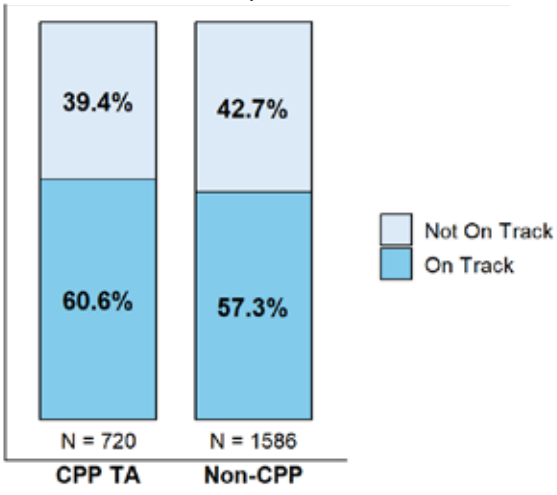
The new Kindergarten Readiness Assessment-Revised (KRA-R2) short form was administered this year. Results show that kindergarteners who attended preschool with CPP TA were more likely to enter kindergarten ready to learn than their peers who did not participate, including kindergartners from similar school districts in Ohio. Research studies have shown that students who perform at these levels of readiness are significantly more likely to reach important educational milestones in their future.

CPP TA Kindergarten Readiness Rate: Approaching and Demonstrating Levels	CPP TA Participants Consistently Score Higher than Non-Participants	CPP TA Participants On Track for Literacy Increased from Last Year
72.2%	**+3.3 - 5.4 points**	**+17.0 points**

Overall KRA-R2 Performance Levels by CPP TA Participation 2025-26



On Track in Language and Literacy by CPP TA Participation 2025-26

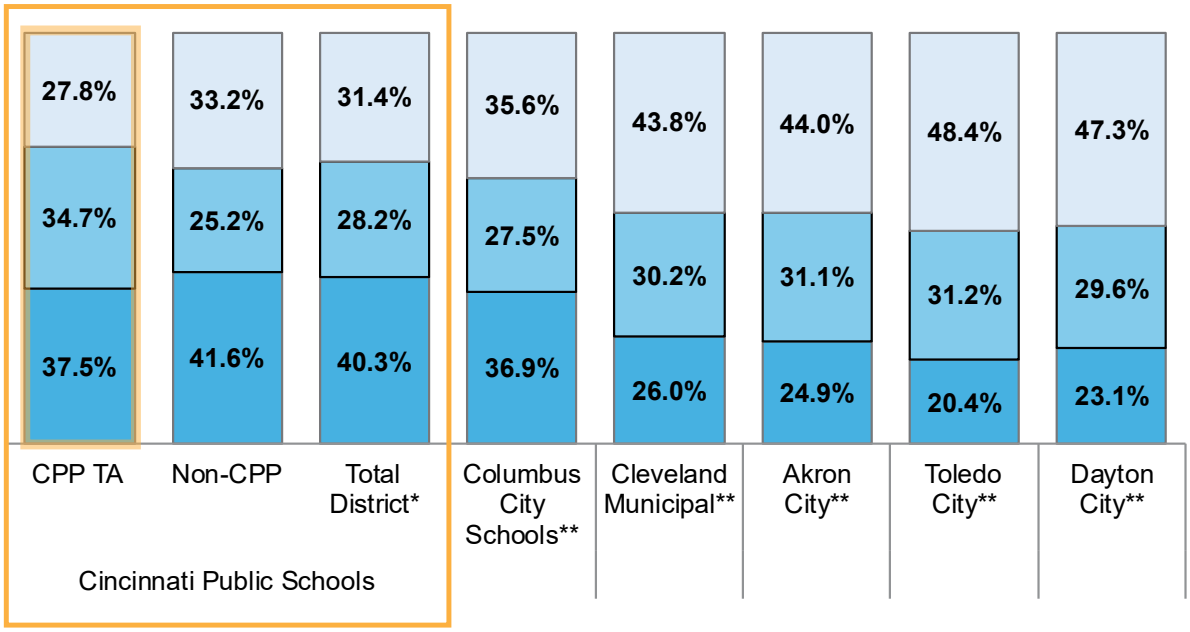


KRA-R2 Demonstrating and Approaching Readiness Comparisons by CPP TA Participation and Select Characteristics

Population	CPP TA	Non-CPP
Race		
Black	73.2%	62.5%
Hispanic	46.5%	37.6%
Multiracial	83.3%	73.8%
White	88.0%	83.8%
Gender		
Female	75.5%	70.6%
Male	68.9%	63.2%
Socioeconomic Status (SES)		
SES 1	67.8%	53.2%
SES 2	74.6%	61.5%
SES 3	73.6%	72.8%
SES 4	80.6%	86.2%
English Language Learner (ELL)		
ELL	57.9%	34.6%
Documented Disability		
Disability	43.7%	30.0%

CPP TA participation was a statistically significant predictor of KRA-R2 performance when controlling for race, SES, disability, and ELL status, **increasing the odds of Demonstrating readiness by 25.2% and being On Track for Literacy by 58.0%.**

Overall KRA-R2 Performance Levels 2025-26: School District Comparison



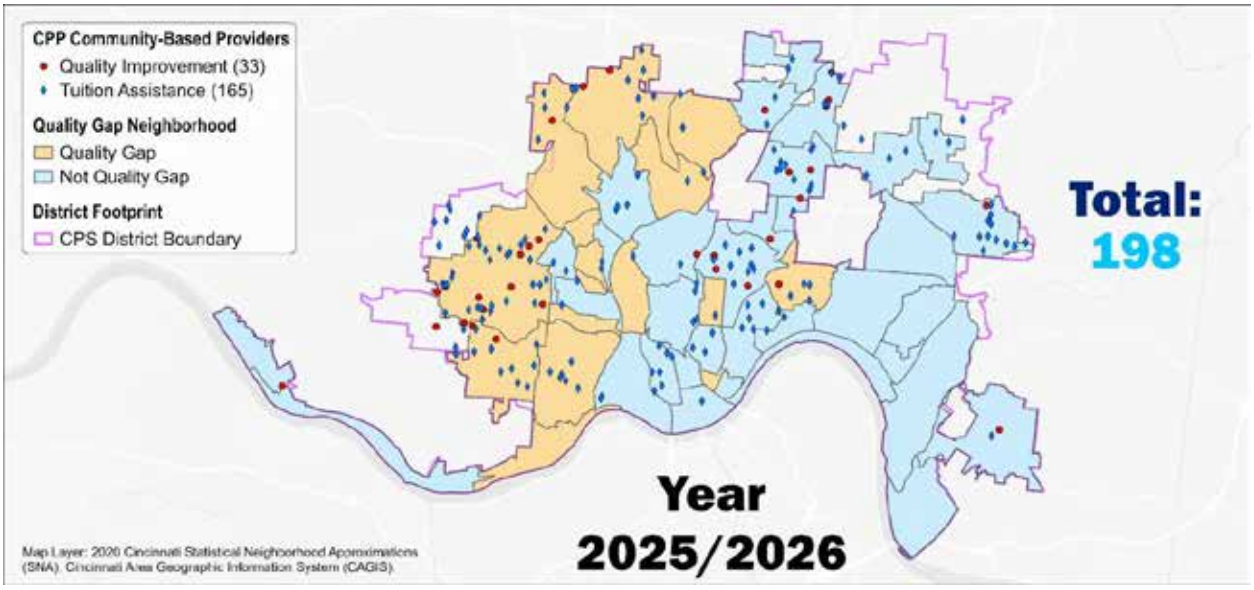
CPP IS STRENGTHENING CINCINNATI'S PRESCHOOL ECOSYSTEM

Expanding Access to High-Quality Preschool

- **198 Providers** in the CPP Community Provider Network offering more than 3,600 quality and high-quality preschool seats, of which 1,615 seats are in quality gap areas

Continuous Quality Improvement, Teacher, and Provider Support

- **More Providers** achieve high-quality ratings through CPP supports and programs
- **10 Providers** advanced to a high-quality rating this year
- **147 Provider** high-quality rating achievements since Year 1



RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS

CPP and partners may consider recommendations as they continue efforts to sustain and expand access to high-quality preschool options in Cincinnati, invest in improvements to the local early childhood system, and adapt to emerging challenges within the early childhood landscape.

CONTINUE HELPING FAMILIES ACCESS HIGH-QUALITY PRESCHOOL: CPP is achieving its primary goal of increasing access to quality preschool as the number high-quality Providers continue to increase as has participation in CPP. Evaluation results also show that CPP TA participants show positive growth and development during preschool and have higher kindergarten readiness than their same-age peers who do not participate in a high-quality CPP experience. CPP should continue prioritizing TA and Provider supports that support and increase children's access to high-quality preschool, and especially those with greatest social and economic needs.

PROMOTE REGULAR PRESCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND EARLY ENGAGEMENT: Attendance rates have steadily increased and remain high among CPP TA participants. Research and local evaluation data document the importance of consistent attendance for children's developmental progress and long-term success in school. CPP should continue efforts that have been effective in increasing preschool attendance and addressing barriers to regular preschool participation, including attendance supports and incentives, Provider and community partnerships, and parent awareness, communication, and engagement.

ENHANCE SUPPORTS FOR PRESCHOOLERS FACING BARRIERS TO SCHOOL SUCCESS: Findings suggest that high-quality preschool benefits children facing barriers to school success. The evaluation was expanded this year and found that disability status, English Language Learner status, race, and socioeconomic conditions are important predictors of kindergarten readiness outcomes. CPP should continue using evaluation data to prevent adverse outcomes for vulnerable groups by offering supports and resources, promoting screening and early identification, implementing inclusive practices, ensuring family engagement, and partnering and advocating in areas most needed. Additionally, for all preschoolers, CPP and partners should focus on strengthening transition supports during kindergarten through third grade to help sustain the progress made during preschool and maximize the long-term benefits of CPP.

CONTINUE SUPPORTING QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND PROVIDER STABILITY: CPP has expanded its community-based TA Provider network from 40 Providers in 2017-18 to 165 Providers in 2025-26. While CPP has successfully expanded high-quality preschool availablity, it cannot solve the sector's complex workforce issues alone. Further investment in Provider quality improvement, support from partners, and changes to statewide policies are needed to address ongoing risks to Provider sustainability and workforce stability to preserve the access gains CPP has achieved over the past decade. CPP partnering within a systems approach will be needed to fully address pipeline, teacher quality and retention, and early childhood workforce issues.

CONSIDER EXPLORING LONGITUDINAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES: The 2025-26 evaluation focuses on outcomes most directly connected to CPP's investments in high-quality preschool; however, there may be increasing value in complementing current findings with additional measures that help stakeholders understand how early gains are maintained over time. Additional investments and partnerships will be required to expand data collection and evaluation. They will also be important for connecting children and families to supports that can help address barriers that exist outside of preschool while expanding CPP's reach and long-term impact.

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Expanding Access to Quality Preschool

HELP SHAPE OUR FUTURE!

Your response enters you in a monthly drawing for a gift card.

SCAN TO START THE SURVEY

As we look ahead, your feedback is truly valued and more important than ever. Take a few minutes to complete the stakeholder survey. Your input will help guide our future priorities, strengthen our efforts, and set our shared strategic direction for the next decade.

Thank you for your continued partnership and for believing in the power of this work. Together, we are building stronger foundations for lifelong learning, so every child thrives.

Cincinnati preschool promise

Expanding Access to Quality Preschool

Building Blocks for Strategic Success

Cincinnati Preschool Promise enters this next phase of its history from a position of experience and commitment. Ten years of active participation in the ECE system, successful delivery of services, and intentional stewardship of long-time partnerships have generated practical learning about what supports children, families, providers, and the early childhood education system. During that time, CPP has listened and responded to families, children, providers, community partners, and the broader public. Their collective experiences, together with CPP's established mission and commitment to its mandate, provided a strong foundation for this work.

The complexity and importance of early childhood education, combined with significant changes since the pandemic, required careful reflection rather than a reactive set of decisions codified on paper. The work builds from recommendations developed by expert external evaluators using evidence-based methods; including literature reviews, surveys, focus groups, local context, and implementation evidence; and from the experience of CPP's leadership, Board, staff, and partners.

Although the ECE environment continues to shift, CPP's commitment remains clear: children and their present and future are the priority. CPP undertook this work with an experienced leadership team, a Board prepared to fulfill its responsibilities, demonstrated public support through the levy, and a strong network of local and community partners. Change with: CPP was created to help frame and lead this work by bringing together the community perspectives, partnerships, and shared commitment needed to advance it. The Strategic Direction development process was intentionally designed to capture the drivers that would have the most significant impact. The five (5) Foundational Drivers set the framework for the readiness work outlined in the Strategic Direction Work Plan for the benefit of the community while keeping Cincinnati's children at its center.

CPP's strategic direction reflects a deliberate, cumulative process. Each step builds on the evidence, learning, and decisions generated along the way.

1 Discovery and Evidence Review

CPP reviewed organizational documents, external evaluations, stakeholder feedback, data, and changes in early childhood education to ground the process in existing commitments, experience, and evidence.

2 Board Assessment and Reflection

Through three facilitated sessions, CPP's Board, leadership, and staff assessed emerging trends, organizational strengths, opportunities, and implications for CPP's future direction.

3 Strategic Direction Development

The findings were consolidated into ten themes. With community-organization observers contributing perspective, the Board prioritized five Foundational Drivers and organized them into the draft Blueprint.

4 Blueprint Review and Confirmation

CPP's Governance Committee reviewed the Blueprint's structure, language, Foundational Drivers, Focus Areas, Readiness Actions, and connections. Its feedback informed the final document.

5 Work Plan Development

CPP staff and leadership will translate each Readiness Action into specific tasks with accountability, timelines, resources, dependencies, and progress monitoring, while identifying matters requiring Board support.

6 Strategic Plan Development

CPP's future Strategic Plan will be informed by the Blueprint, progress and learning from the Work Plan, and additional information and community perspectives gathered during the readiness phase.

Strategic Direction Framework

The Strategic Direction Framework is built around five interconnected clarify and align to guide its future direction.

Reaffirm CPP's Role and Set Strategic Priorities

CPP's established mission, role, and ten years of practical experience provide the foundation for setting its next strategic priorities. As the early childhood education landscape changes, CPP will use that foundation to reaffirm where it should lead, work through partnerships, seek to influence, monitor, or recognize the responsibility of others; focusing its resources where it can make the greatest contribution while maintaining responsible stewardship and a clear focus on children and families.

Strengthen Aligned Partnerships and CPP's Ecosystem Positioning

CPP was created to help frame and lead this work, but meaningful and lasting progress requires shared effort. CPP will build intentional, differentiated partnerships that draw on a strong network of local and community partners, define roles and mutual value, and ensure that future direction is informed by, created with, and beneficial to the community—while keeping children's present and future at the center.

Adapt and Innovate to Increase CPP's Value to the Community

CPP will use ten years of learning and strong recommendations from respected external evaluators to guide a deliberate, evidence-informed approach to adaptation and innovation. Literature reviews, surveys, focus groups, local context, implementation experience, and continued community input will inform decisions about when to test, improve, expand, pursue with partners, monitor, or discontinue an initiative; ensuring that evidence and learning translate into practical actions that can be tested, strengthened, and adjusted as conditions change.

Foundational Drivers that define the areas CPP must

Refine CPP's Theory of Change, Priority Population, and Family Outreach

CPP will use its established Theory of Change, ten years of implementation learning, and the experiences shared by families, children, providers, and the broader public to improve family outreach and equitable access. CPP will remain open to additional perspectives as needs and barriers change, using current evidence to help families move from awareness through enrollment and continued participation in CPP-supported opportunities.

Advance Resource Sustainability

CPP will advance resource sustainability from a position of strength: an experienced leadership team, a responsible Board prepared to act in difficult conditions, demonstrated public support through the levy, and a strong network of local and community partners. The work will connect current and future resource requirements with viable funding, partnerships, public support, external engagement, and investment readiness while reinforcing responsible stewardship.

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Expanding Access to Quality Preschool

Five Foundations for the Future

Reaffirm CPP's Role and Set Strategic Priorities

Adapt and Innovate to Increase CPP's Value to the Community

Improve Family Outreach and Equitable Access

Advance Resource Sustainability

Strengthen Aligned Partnerships and CPP's Ecosystem Positioning

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Celebrating the Power of the Promise

Cincinnati Preschool Promise
2400 Reading Road, Suite 220 • Cincinnati, Ohio 45202
www.cincy-promise.org • 513-447-4277