



Evaluation of Georgia's 2025 Rising Kindergarten Summer Transition Program

Executive Summary

The Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (FPG) conducted a follow-up evaluation of the 2025 Rising Kindergarten Summer Transition Program (STP) in partnership with Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL). Because the most recent studies of the Rising Kindergarten STP were conducted more than a decade ago (Early et al., 2014, 2015), this study aimed to: (1) collect updated classroom quality scores and (2) examine lead teacher and transition coach perspectives about the program. This evaluation is particularly important given the significant changes in early childhood education following the COVID-19 pandemic.

FPG conducted 118 classroom observations of teacher-child interactions and the quality of teachers' language and literacy practices. Teachers, transition coaches, and site and program directors completed surveys to provide their perspectives on the program.

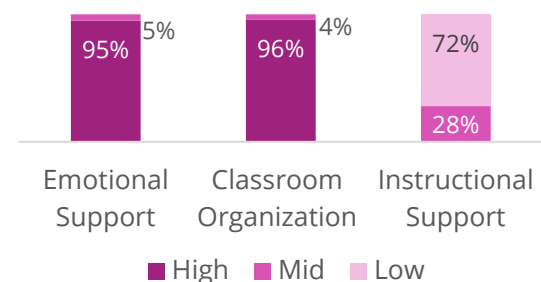
Key Findings

Classroom quality was high overall. Most classrooms scored in the high-range for Emotional Support and Classroom Organization.

Instructional support was more variable. Most classrooms scored in the mid-range, and nearly a third scored in the low-range.

Language and literacy supports were mixed. General classroom environment scores were generally strong, but print and early writing were weaker, especially in public sites.

Figure 1. Strongest in Emotional Support and Classroom Organization, but Lower in Instructional Support



2025 Rising Kindergarten Summer Transition Program Study

Educators were highly experienced. Teachers averaged 20 years of teaching experience, and children spent more time engaged in science when teachers had more experience.

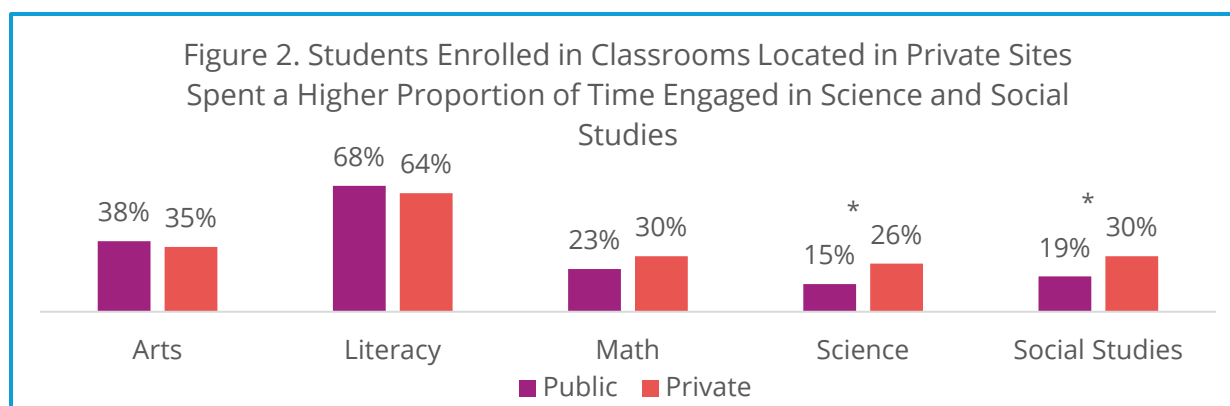
Educators viewed the program positively. Teachers, coaches, and directors agreed that the program supports children's kindergarten enrollment and attendance, with transition coaches playing a key role (see quote from STP Transition Coach below).

"Regardless of background or proficiency level, every child enrolled in an STP program benefits in meaningful ways. These programs are designed to serve the children who are present — not just the ideal candidates. I've personally witnessed children overcome challenging behaviors, learn to write their names, and develop a genuine love for school within the supportive environment of an STP classroom."

- STP Transition Coach

Differences across classrooms and sites suggest targeted areas for improvement.

- Private sites spent more time in centers, science, and social studies (see Figure 2 for time spent in content areas); public sites spent more time in whole-group instruction.
- Opportunities for improvement were identified for classrooms with a higher proportion of children with disabilities, boys, and English Language Learners.



Note. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Conclusion

Overall, the 2025 Rising Kindergarten STP remains a strong transition program, with the clearest areas for improvement in instructional support, print and early writing, and supports for diverse learners.

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