



**Georgia Dept
of Early Care
and Learning**
BRIGHT FROM THE START

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Georgia’s Pre-K Participation Boosts Early Language Development

New Report Finds that Language-Rich Classrooms Nurture Skills Growth

ATLANTA, Ga., (May 28, 2026) – A new report shows again why Georgia’s Pre-K Program is among the best in the nation. The intentional teaching strategies and nurturing classroom environments integral to the program are leading students to greater-than-expected gains in language and literacy.

The report, *Georgia’s Pre-K Evaluation: Study of Language Development in Pre-K*, shares the findings of a yearlong study of language and literacy development in the Georgia’s Pre-K Program during the 2022–2023 school year. The study was conducted by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (FPG) and funded by the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL).

The FPG researchers used child assessments, classroom observations, and teacher and family surveys to uncover specific practices in Georgia’s Pre-K program that uniquely support children’s language skill growth. They found that the quality of teacher-child interactions, classroom environments, and high-quality language and literacy practices and supports led to optimal results.

“Georgia’s Pre-K classrooms are providing interactions with children that are warm, responsive, and language rich within enriched learning environments,” the report states. “Classrooms using intentional strategies to support vocabulary knowledge during designated times in their schedule and where children

were highly engaged in language activities, facilitated slightly greater-than-expected growth in vocabulary knowledge relative to same-age peers.”

Those factors worked together to generate strong student skill growth in language and literacy. “Children attending the Georgia’s Pre-K program continue to demonstrate patterns of growth in their language development that are similar to or exceed skill growth of other children of the same age within a national sample,” the researchers conclude.

“Language and literacy skill development is critical for building a strong foundation for future learning, so it’s gratifying that research continues to document Pre-K’s effectiveness in moving the needle on young learners’ progress in that area,” said DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs. “This study is also helpful because it pinpoints areas where additional supports could improve literacy levels moving forward.”

This report is consistent with the results of previous investigations:

- A 2012–2013 study, also by FPG, found that Pre-K participation had significant positive effects on children’s kindergarten readiness, including improvements in language and literacy, math, and general knowledge.
- A 2015–2016 analysis of third-grade milestone test results by Child Trends showed that students who attended Pre-K outperformed classmates who did not.
- A 2013–2019 longitudinal study, also by FPG, concluded that at the end of fourth grade, the children who attended Pre-K were still performing at or above the national average and had better language, literacy, and executive function skills than those who did not.

The full report and executive summary are available on [DECAL’s website](#).

About UNC Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (FPG)

Founded in 1966, FPG transforms the lives of children and families through interdisciplinary research, evaluation, implementation, technical assistance, and outreach. FPG generates knowledge, informs policies, and supports practices to promote positive developmental and educational outcomes for children of all backgrounds and all abilities from the earliest years. Learn more by visiting <https://fpg.unc.edu/>.

About DECAL

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia's children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia's Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers

Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program, federal nutrition programs, and manages Quality Rated, Georgia's community powered child care rating system.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to www.decal.ga.gov.