

PHLpreK By the Numbers

Introduction

Throughout his two terms as Mayor, Jim Kenney has prioritized the importance of public education to help our children reach their full potential, and also as an essential element in the fight against generational poverty in Philadelphia.

Since 2016, the Kenney Administration in partnership with Philadelphia City Council has made a series of historic investments in public education, totaling more than \$1.5 billion, centered on early education, robust resources and activities for students and families, and post-secondary access to programs and services.

Key to the success of this effort was the enactment of the game-changing Philadelphia Beverage Tax in 2016. The Beverage Tax has provided more than \$483 million for public education programs over the last seven years, including two signature programs: PHLpreK, which has dramatically expanded free access to quality pre-K programs throughout the city; and Community Schools, which transform schools as hubs of social, behavioral, and educational services for students, families, and neighbors, all designed to remove barriers to education.

Why PreK Matters

Research shows that access to high-quality early childhood education improves young children's readiness for elementary school, helps close the achievement gap, and strengthens neighborhood networks of prekindergarten (pre-K) providers.¹ Before the PHLpreK program, two out of three preschool-aged children in Philadelphia did not have access to affordable, high-quality pre-K.² The launch of PHLpreK helped to expand access to ECE by increasing the number of publicly funded, high-quality opportunities for Pre-K enrollment.

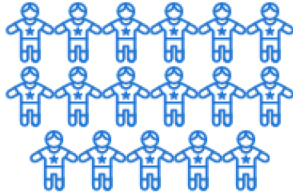
Program Description

Since its inception in 2017, PHLpreK has provided free access to quality pre-K programs. To qualify for enrollment, students must live in Philadelphia and be three or four years old by September 1st of the academic year. PHLpreK funds a 5.5-hour school day during the traditional 180-day school year. Families seeking additional hours can apply for subsidized care or pay tuition.

¹ https://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Policy_Brief_PHILPreK_v6.8.21_5pm_Final.pdf

ENROLLMENT

PHLpreK dramatically expanded access to quality pre-kindergarten programs throughout the city, especially in historically underserved communities.

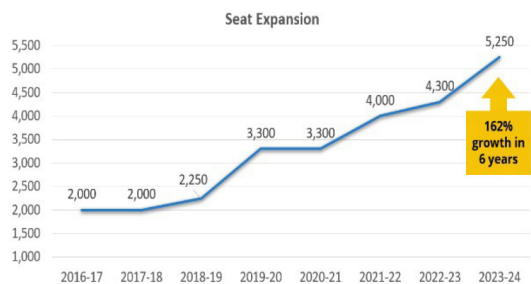


Each icon represents 1,000 children

Students

Since 2017, PHLpreK has served approximately 17,000 three- and four-year-old children, providing free access to quality programs that prepare them for future academic success. During the 2023-2024 school year alone, PHLpreK will serve more than 5,000 preschool children in Philadelphia.

Communities



PHLpreK successfully added an additional 5,250 free, quality, full-day preschool seats available at over 220 locations across 43 Philadelphia ZIP codes. Enrollment expanded the most in historically marginalized neighborhoods. While enrollment increased in neighborhoods across the city during the program's first five years, the greatest increase over time in providers and seat growth occurred in neighborhoods with predominantly Black and Hispanic residents.



Across the first five years of PHLpreK, 65% of students who attended their first year of programming at 3 years old attended a second year of programming.



"My daughter is absolutely thriving in kindergarten thanks to (PHLpreK). Her PHLpreK experience helped her overcome many of the challenges she had and gave her the confidence she needed to really shine as an independent kindergartner. As a working parent, PHLpreK gave me a safe place for her to learn and grow."

– N.B., parent of PHLpreK graduate

² https://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Policy_Brief_PHILPreK_v6.8.21_5pm_Final.pdf

PROVIDERS

PHLpreK helped promote a diverse community of high-quality-program providers. PHLpreK Investments grew provider capacity and empowered businesses owned by women, people of color, and people with a disability.



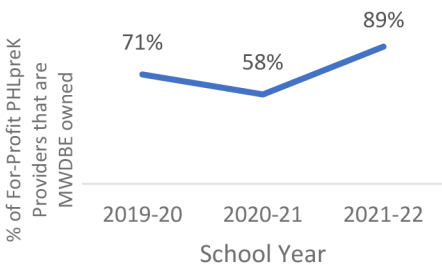
High Quality

PHLpreK increased both the number of providers and the percentage of high-quality providers. By SY18-19, nearly all PHLpreK providers were STAR 3 or 4, and this remained true for all the following school years. Additionally, the quality of programs did not fall during COVID.



High Standards

PHLprek has a commitment to improving the quality of early learning available to families. When the program started in 2017, 57% of seats were STAR 3 or 4.⁴ In the current (23-24) school year, over 95% of all PHLpreK seats are in STAR 3 or 4 rated centers.



Minority, Women, and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises

Every year, a solid majority (ranging 58 percent to 89 percent) of PHLpreK providers have identified as businesses owned by women, people of color, or people with a disability.

³ Results based on 218 parent and caregiver survey responses from the 2022-23 school year.

⁴ As evaluated by the Pennsylvania STARS quality rating and improvement system.

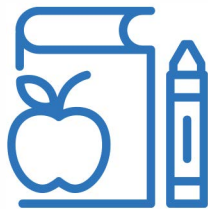
STUDENT SUCCESS

PHLpreK had a positive impact on students who attended programming, based on teacher and caregiver perception.



Classroom Gains

Teachers provided positive reviews on PHLpreK student performance, as demonstrated by student gains in social emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, and mathematics skills (2020-2022). They reported a larger proportion of students met or exceeded expectations in the Spring compared to when they were screened in the Fall.



Kindergarten and PreK Registration

Caregivers overwhelmingly noted growth in their child's social/emotional development (88%), literacy and language skills (78%), and motor skills and physical development (65%) as indicators of kindergarten readiness in their children for the 2022-23 school year.³ Additionally, at least 71% of PHLpreK students had a verified kindergarten registration file at the end of the 2022-23 school year.



More than half (58%) of surveyed caregivers also reported that enrolling in PHLpreK assisted with work-life balance, and 44% reported returning to work as a result of PHLpreK enrollment.⁵

⁵ Results based on 216 parent and caregiver survey responses from the 2022-23 school year.