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NSECD Participating Schools
Caddo Parish
M. Alexander Christian Academy
Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament University Christian Prep
Calcasieu Parish
Sacred Heart Catholic School
East Baton Rouge Parish
Kiddies Kampos
St. Gerard Majella School
East Carroll Parish
Briarfield Academy
Franklin Parish
Family Community Christian School
Iberia Parish
Little Treasures Early Learning Center

NSECD Participating Schools (cont.)
Jefferson Parish
Conquering Word Christian Academy
Our Lady of Prompt Succor
St. Anthony School
Lafayette Parish
Gethsemane Christian Academy
Holy Family Catholic School
Immaculate Heart of Mary School
Lafourche Parish
Holy Rosary Catholic School
St. Mary’s Nativity Catholic School
Lincoln Parish
New Living Word
Orleans Parish
Cathedral Academy
Holy Ghost Catholic School
Resurrection of Our Lord School
Royal Castle Child Development Center
St. Alphonsus School
St. Benedict the Moor
St. Leo the Great
St. Joan of Arc School
St. Mary’s Academy
St. Peter Claver School
St. Rita School
Upperroom Bible Church
Quachita Parish
Clayborne Christian School
Our Lady of Fatima School
St. Charles Parish
Boutte Christian Academy
St. John the Baptist Parish
Our Lady of Grace School
St. Landry Parish
Louisiana Preparatory School
Family Worship
Tangipahoa Parish
Gordon Richardson Christian
St. Tammany Parish
Cedarwood School

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Nonpublic Schools
Early Childhood Development
2009-2010

Prepared by
Cecil J. Picard Center for Child Development and Lifelong Learning at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette
NSEC D’s Prekindergarten Success

Analyses of Louisiana’s Nonpublic Schools Early Childhood Development Program (NSECD) test scores over past school years reveal significant improvements in the participating children’s performance. In 2009–10, progress was measured for 1,032 NSEC D students who completed both a pretest and a posttest in Language, Print, and Math. NSEC D student performance has shown steady growth, with posttest scores for the last six years close to or higher than the national average on the Developing Skills Checklist (DSC). All posttest scores during the 2009–10 school year remained consistent with posttest scores during the 2008–09 school year and surpassed the achievement level of previous years across all subject areas. These results coincide with the implementation of high-quality Louisiana Standards for Programs Serving Four-Year-Old Children, such as hiring certified teachers, providing full-day programs, and maintaining a low child-to-teacher ratio. Research-based and developmentally appropriate practices outlined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) serve as a philosophical foundation for the NSEC D program.

The History of Nonpublic Schools Early Childhood Development (NSECD)

The NSEC D prekindergarten program began in 2001 with legislative appropriation through Louisiana’s Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), a federal block grant designed to foster interest in learning, increase literacy skills, prevent poverty, and promote development of responsible behavior. Through TANF funding, NSEC D students are required to regularly attend the program (regular enrollment equates to 74% attendance of all classes each month). The program’s goal is to “provide at-risk 4-year-old children access to high-quality, developmentally appropriate prekindergarten classes and before- and after-school enrichment activities, in a nonpublic school and Class A child care setting.” The prekindergarten program follows the Louisiana Standards for Programs Serving Four-Year-Old Children to ensure the provision of high-quality services at no cost to those children eligible for free or reduced price lunch services (FRL). Children who do not qualify based on income may pay tuition or may be privately funded. Over the last six years, the following characteristics have emerged as quality anchors of the Louisiana preschool effort:

- Teachers maintain qualifications mandated by the Louisiana Department of Education
- At least 18 hours of targeted professional development provided to teachers each year
- 10:1 child-to-adult ratio
- Small classroom size of 20 children
- Full-day (six-hour) program
- Vision, hearing, and dental screenings
- Research-based and developmentally appropriate curricula
- Before- and after-school enrichment activities
- Pretest and posttest measurement of student progress using the DSC
- Evaluation and longitudinal research necessary to measure and predict outcomes
- Appropriate materials and supplies
- Portfolio assessments to guide individual student instruction
- Collaboration with physical health, mental health, and social service agencies
- Support and adult education for children and their families

What the Future Holds

For the past six years, results from the evaluation of the NSEC D program have consistently supported the same conclusion: high-quality preschool works! In order to continue monitoring the short- and long-term progress of these children, the Governor’s Office of Community Programs’ early childhood staff and the Picard Center for Child Development and Lifelong Learning at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette will work to promote the following goals, based on recent research findings:

- Consider increasing statewide participation in NSEC D in highly impoverished parishes and regions across the state.
- Identify and provide ongoing technical assistance to NSEC D outlying districts (both the highest performing and lowest performing schools on the DSC posttest assessment).
- Determine factors that contribute to the success of the higher performing schools and ascertain the needs of the lower performing schools (e.g., curriculum integration, leadership and staff morale, ongoing professional development).
- Investigate the benefit of serving at-risk, targeted 3-year-olds by identifying the essential predictors that would warrant a child’s participation in high-quality early childhood education for two years.
- Collaborate with child care, Head Start, and other agencies to explore opportunities for expansion.
- Continue to expand professional development opportunities focused on program needs (e.g., planning, curriculum alignment, portfolios, using assessments to guide instruction, preparing the environment, science, math, and art integration).
- Collaborate with university partners to develop alternative strategies that will increase the number of certified teachers and highly qualified teacher assistants.
- Continue to expand literacy materials relative to early childhood curricula.
- Continue to compare pretest and posttest scores of at-risk 4-year-old children who participate in the NSEC D program to ensure that these students continue to show significant gains in the academic areas of Language, Print, and Math.
- Encourage schools to provide additional high-quality early education opportunities to help children become “school ready.”
- Increase student achievement on high-stakes assessments, such as LEAP, LEAP, and the Graduation Exit Exam (GEE) by increasing participation in NSEC D.
- Reduce grade-retention rates by increasing participation in NSEC D.
- Reduce special education classification by increasing participation in NSEC D.
- Analyze the impact of high-stakes testing results upon student dropout rates among NSEC D students at the 7th-, 8th-, and 9th-grade levels.

“Let us be a proud nation that takes responsibility for all our children.”

- Judy Heumann
  American disability rights activist
Program Quality
NSECD seeks to offer the highest quality early childhood experience. The central expectations that serve as a foundation are developmentally appropriate practices, the NAECY philosophy, extended before- and after-school enrichment activities, a competent and caring staff, and the full utilization of materials, supplies, and equipment. In order to document the implementation of these expectations, specific program information is outlined in this summary.

Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) Pilot Data
The Early Language & Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) is a standardized tool that describes those supports considered important for language and literacy development in the classroom. The revised ELLCO Pre-K Tool includes two subscales: (1) general classroom environment, and (2) language and literacy. It is described as an observation instrument that has been designed for use in center-based classrooms for 3-to-5-year-old children.

The 2009–10 school year represented the first year of ELLCO implementation within 77 NSECD classrooms. NSECD classrooms were observed during the fall 2009 and spring 2010 terms. NSECD completed the 2009–10 school year with an overall ELLCO score of 4.4. This score constitutes a “sufficient” ELLCO rating during the pilot year of ELLCO implementation. All observational data were collected during the 2009–10 school year by NSECD program monitors. In general, NSECD classrooms exceeded the standard of effective literacy practices. NSECD classrooms rated highest within the Books and Book Reading section of the ELLCO Pre-K Tool, with an overall post-assessment score of 4.6 (see Figure 7). Although scores increased and represented a “sufficient” rating in each section of the ELLCO Pre-K Tool, it was identified that the Language Environment and the Print and Early Writing sections of the ELLCO Pre-K Tool represented the lowest overall post-assessment scores of 4.2 (see Figure 7).

Who Is Served by NSECD?
In 2009–10, prekindergarten intervention was provided in the NSECD program for 1,308 NSECD-eligible children. The NSECD program targets at-risk children whose family income is below 200% of the federal poverty level. In addition, the program provides access to support services, which include vision, hearing, and dental screenings.

At the beginning of the school year, parents reported that nearly 92% of NSECD participants qualified for FRL services for the 2009–10 school year. This percentage is based upon the dataset of 1,032 NSECD students. This demonstrates that the program serves the targeted population of at-risk children.

Figure 1. Enrollment of NSECD students across program years
Data Source: NSECD program
Changes in enrollment differ from 2004–05 and 2005–06 due to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Enrollment numbers were obtained on October 1st of each year.

Figure 2. Percentage of NSECD cohort 7 students enrolled and attending regularly by region, 2009–10
Data Source: NSECD program
**Improved Performance on the Developing Skills Checklist (DSC)**

Each year, NSECD students’ progress over the school year is measured, in part, by comparing their pretest performance to their posttest performance on the DSC. In 2009–10, progress was measured in this way for the NSECD cohort 7 (n = 1,032) students. Figures 3 and 4 document the progress students made in the three subtest areas of Language, Print, and Math. Regardless of the data analysis conducted, percentile ranking across the years, or quartile movement during the year, the NSECD cohort 7 children showed significant improvement from pretest to posttest. While all posttest scores were statistically significant and above the national average in all areas tested, Math continues to be the greatest challenge for the NSECD population, with 15% of students remaining in the first quartile (see Figure 4).

**Figure 3.** National Percentile Rank for NSECD students statewide in Language, Print, and Math across program years

*Primary Data Source: Developing Skills Checklist, 2009–10*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Print</th>
<th>Math</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004–05 (n = 983)</td>
<td>2005–06 (n = 393)</td>
<td>2006–07 (n = 867)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4.** Percentage of NSECD cohort 7 students scoring in the respective quartiles on the DSC pretest and posttest fall 2009 to spring 2010 (n = 1,032)

*Primary Data Source: Developing Skills Checklist, 2009–10*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Print</th>
<th>Math</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Closing the Gap: Student Performance**

Children enrolled in the NSECD program demonstrate a similar proportion of correct responses on the DSC, regardless of ethnicity or income level. These results also suggest positive responses from lower income families.

**Figure 5.** Proportion of Correct Responses in Language on the DSC for NSECD cohort 7 students by ethnicity (n = 1,032)

*Primary Data Source: Developing Skills Checklist, 2009–10*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Language Posttest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White (n = 132)</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority (n = 840)</td>
<td>57.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (n = 1,032)</td>
<td>60.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 6.** Proportion of Correct Responses in Language on the DSC for NSECD cohort 7 students by income level (n = 1,032)

*Primary Data Source: Developing Skills Checklist, 2009–10*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Language Posttest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $10,000 (n = 386)</td>
<td>55.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000–$19,999 (n = 266)</td>
<td>57.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000–$29,999 (n = 255)</td>
<td>58.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000–$44,999 (n = 145)</td>
<td>64.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (n = 1,032)</td>
<td>60.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>