

PFA Child Outcomes

Erikson Institute • SRI International • Illinois State Board of Education

This fact sheet summarizes findings from the Illinois Preschool for All (PFA) program evaluation conducted by Erikson Institute and SRI International. PFA programs are funded by the Illinois State Board of Education to provide early education opportunities for children between the ages of three and five, with priority given to children from low-income families and those who are determined to be “at risk.” The evaluation took an in-depth look at PFA programs throughout the state (excluding the city of Chicago) from 2008 through 2010 to provide a picture of PFA program quality, children’s school readiness, and the characteristics of program participants.

How do children fare in Preschool for All?

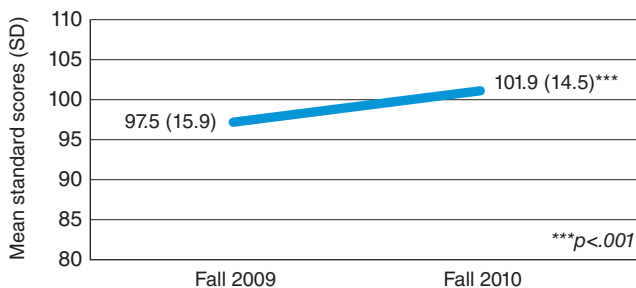
Trained evaluators assessed children in preschool in fall 2009 and again in kindergarten in fall 2010. Assessors used a variety of measures to assess children’s development in the areas of vocabulary skills, letter and word identification, early math skills, social skills, problem behaviors, and attention and task persistence.

PFA children’s pre-academic outcomes vary.

From the initial assessment in the fall of the preschool year (at age 4) until kindergarten entry (at age 5), PFA children overall showed significant improvements in vocabulary skills, no change in early literacy skills, and a significant decline in early math skills.

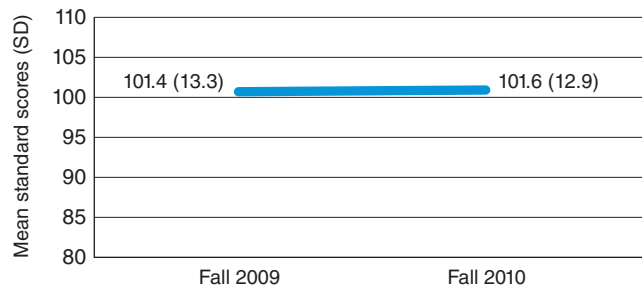
Improvement in Vocabulary Skills

Source: Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test–Fourth Edition (PPVT-4) (n=623)



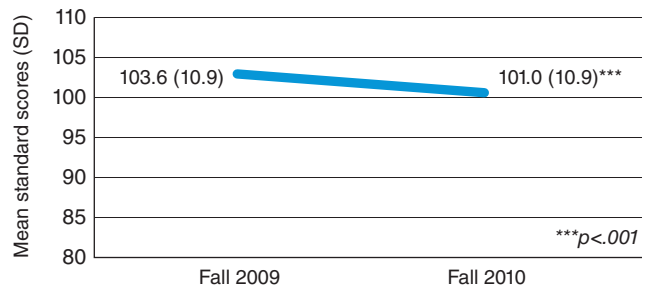
No Change in Early Literacy Skills

Source: Woodcock-Johnson III Achievement Battery, Letter-Word Identification (n=635)



Decline in Early Math Skills

Source: Woodcock-Johnson III Achievement Battery, Applied Problems (n=634)

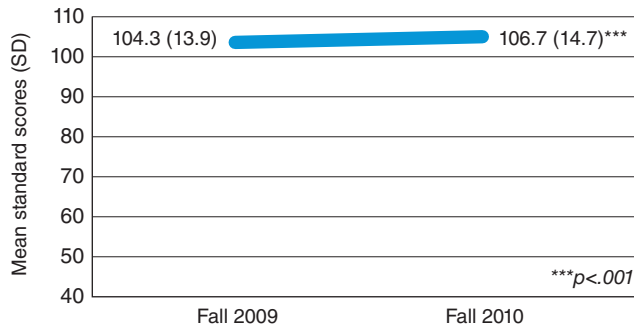


PFA children showed improvement in social and behavioral skills.

At kindergarten entry, PFA children showed significant improvements in social skills and attention/persistence from the fall of their preschool year.

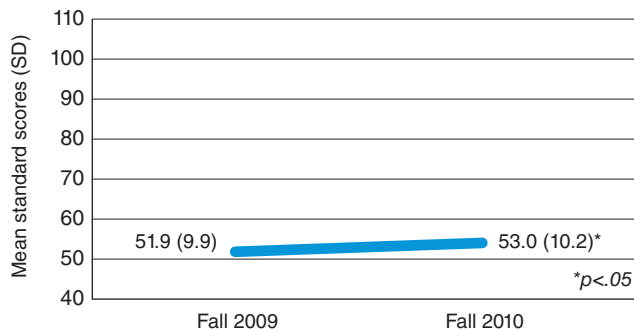
Improvement in Social Skills

Source: Teacher report checklist, Preschool and Kindergarten Behavior Scales–2nd Ed. (n=436)



Improvement in Attention/Persistence

Source: Preschool Learning Behaviors Scale (n=438)

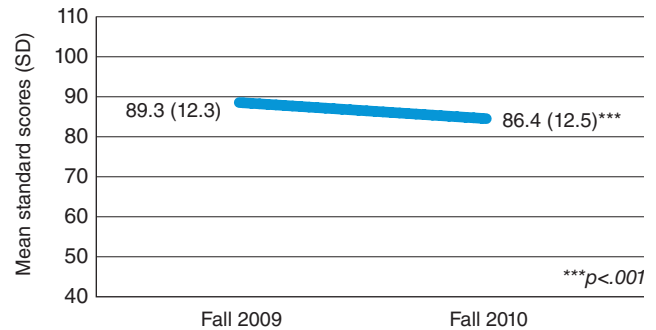


PFA children also showed significant improvement in problem behaviors.

A decrease in score on the problem behaviors measures, as shown below, indicates that children are having fewer problem behaviors.

Decline in Problem Behaviors

Source: Teacher report checklist, Preschool and Kindergarten Behavior Scales–2nd Ed. (n=438)



About the data: The evaluation team collected data from multiple sources, including a web-based survey and interviews with program administrators, interviews with parents, teacher surveys, classroom observations, and direct assessments of children. The evaluation took an in-depth look at 120 programs and nearly 700 children and their families throughout the state (excluding the city of Chicago).

For more information about the Illinois Preschool for All (PFA) Evaluation, visit www.erikson.edu/PFAEvaluation.

Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy at Erikson Institute

Lead Evaluator

Erikson Institute advances the ability of practitioners, researchers, and decision makers to improve life for children and their families through its academic programs, applied research, and community partnerships and initiatives.

The Herr Research Center conducts original research, evaluations, and analysis to inform, guide, and support effective early childhood policy.

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SRI International

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SRI International is an independent, non-profit research institute conducting client-sponsored research and development for government agencies, commercial businesses, foundations, and other organizations. The Early Childhood Program is part of SRI's Policy Division.

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Early Childhood Division

Illinois State Board of Education

Funder

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) administers public education in Illinois. The Early Childhood Division focuses on children from birth to 8 years old.

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