

About CPCs

The Child Parent Center preschool to 3rd grade (CPC P-3) model is a center-based early childhood model that provides comprehensive educational and family support services, primarily in low-income neighborhoods. CPC P-3 is an expanded and enhanced form of the original CPC program, which was established by the Chicago Public School District in 1967. The CPC has demonstrated for over four decades that it is one of the nation's most effective educational reform strategies.⁴

Because of their demonstrated impact on well-being, early childhood interventions are at the forefront of prevention for improving educational success and health. The goal of the CPC P-3 program is to improve early childhood education through family engagement and high-quality instruction, making transition to the next grade easier.



“Finding strategies that work for students who are at low academic levels is a challenge. Our school has been greatly helped by the CPC P-3 program because it builds the foundation at the younger grades, which then flows into greater success and achievement as these children move up through the grades.”

—
Derrick Orr, Principal, Chicago Public Schools

The model seeks to provide students a supportive learning environment that is consistent, stable, and predictable, while increasing collaboration between school staff, the community, and parents. In the CPC P-3 program, sites implement six core elements:

Collaborative Leadership Team

A team run by the Head Teacher in collaboration with the principal to establish and structure the climate of the school and to promote more cohesive instructional practices.

Effective Learning Experiences

Experiences that ensure mastery in language literacy, math, science, and socio-emotional development throughout early childhood.

Aligned Curriculum and Practices

Organized sequence of evidence-based curricula and instructional practices that address multiple areas of child development within a balanced, activity-based approach.

Parent Involvement and Engagement

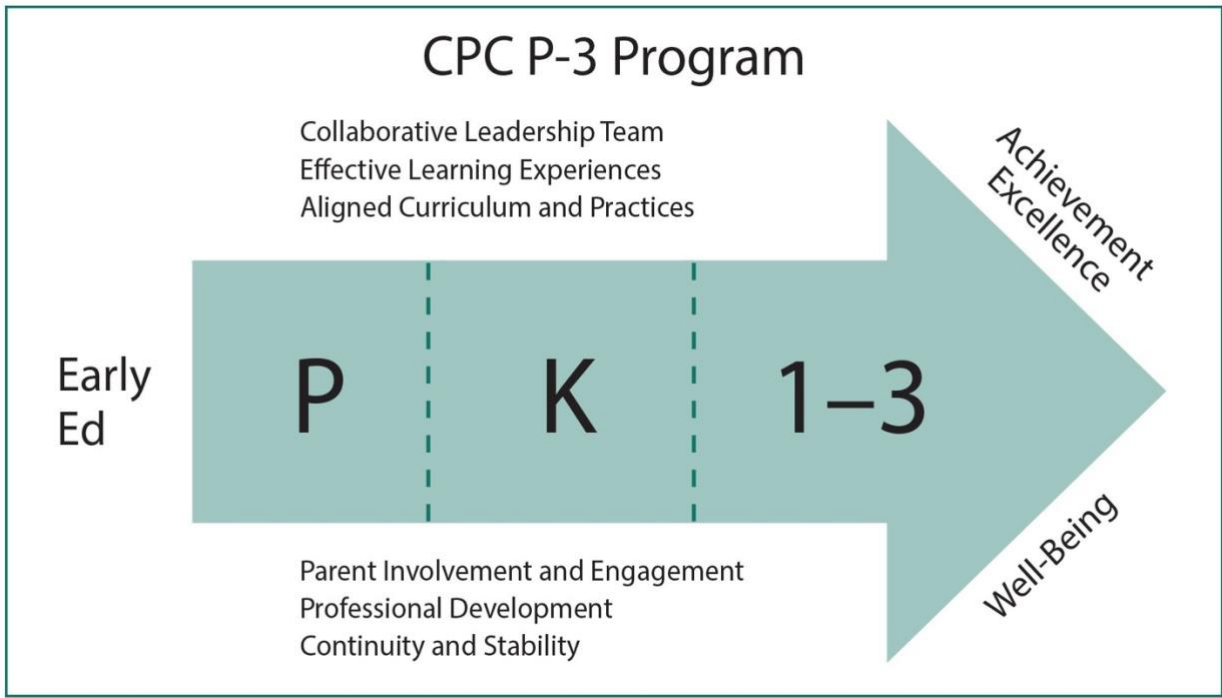
Comprehensive services led by the Parent Resource Teachers and School-Community Representatives, including multifaceted activities and opportunities to engage families.

Professional Development

Online professional development and onsite follow-up support for teachers throughout the year.

Continuity and Stability

Preschool to school-age continuity, promoted by locating CPC centers in schools or nearby, that incorporates comprehensive service delivery and stability for children and families.



Midwest CPC Expansion

The Midwest CPC Expansion (MCPC) has been a hallmark project of the Human Capital Research Collaborative (HCRC), a partnership between the University of Minnesota and the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis to promote effective public policies and programs for young people through multidisciplinary research on human development and learning. Under an Investing in Innovation Grant from the U.S. Department of Education, HCRC began an expansion of the CPC program in 2012 in four school districts, including St. Paul, Minnesota, and Chicago, Evanston, and Normal in Illinois.

Impact

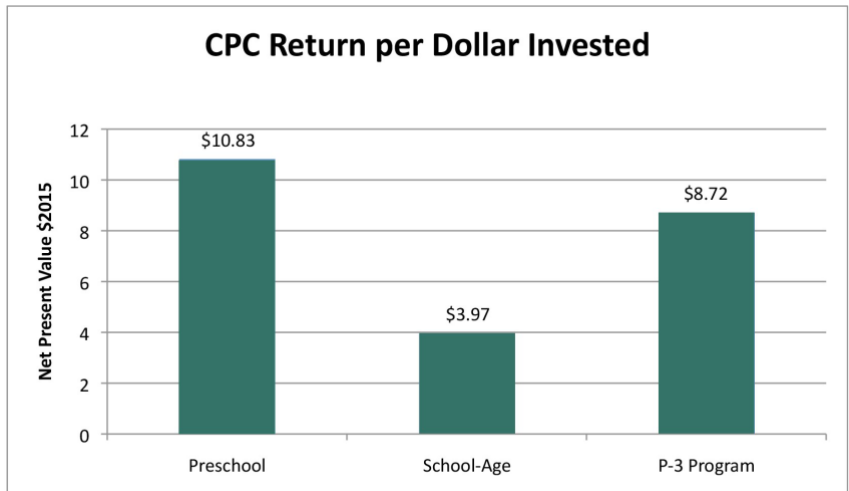
Research following program alumni through age 28 indicates that CPC preschool participation leads to greater academic, social, and economic success. Specifically, program participation was independently linked to higher educational attainment, income, socio-economic status, and health insurance coverage, as well as lower rates of justice-system involvement and substance abuse.

CPC participants had greater rates of high school completion than members of a socio-demographically matched comparison group, which contributed to higher economic status.

By early adulthood, CPC participants had a higher average annual income, higher health insurance coverage rates, and lower rates of incarceration and substance abuse.

Economic returns

Data collected on program alumni through age 37 indicate that the CPC program has high economic returns to society. Benefits include savings in the criminal justice system for delinquency and crime prevention, increased tax revenues because of higher levels of educational attainment and career success, savings for reduced levels of special education placement, and savings in child welfare for reduced rates of child abuse and neglect.²



The importance of context

In assessing the effectiveness of the CPC P-3 reform model, it is critical to consider the socio-structural contexts where these interventions can function most constructively. In recent years, a significant emphasis on social determinants of health (SDOH) research has illuminated the influence of environmental conditions in shaping developmental trajectories and long-term outcomes in achievement and well-being. Early life circumstances and experiences are underlying socioeconomic determinants of health that have the potential to mitigate or bolster the efforts of early childhood interventions.^{3,4}

Evidence from the HCRC

The HCRC is conducting research to better understand the mechanisms through which CPC participation influences different spheres of socio-cultural influence like economic stability, environmental infrastructure, community context, and education and health care access and quality. We have created a novel SDOH index to measure the association between early education intervention and later outcomes of structural equality and support. Further investigation is needed to better understand the reciprocal nature of the associations between environmental context and CPC program effectiveness.

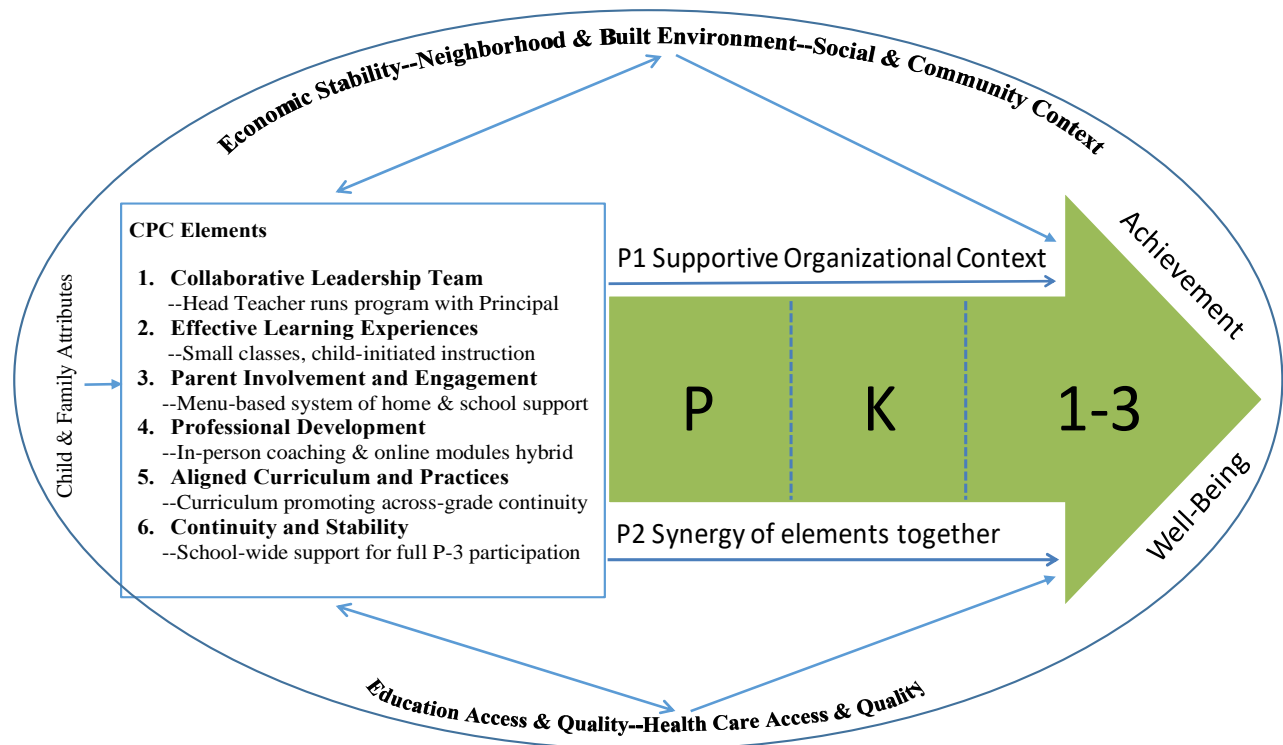


Figure. Ten Essential Elements of Early Childhood Programs and Socio-Structural Influences on Achievement & Well-Being. The 10 elements are derived from effectiveness research since the 1960s but emphasize the past decade. They divide into four categories. Two foundational principles for the elements are a supportive and enriching organizational context (Principle [P] 1) and synergy of elements (Principle [P] 2) such that benefits increase as the number of well-implemented elements increases. The five socio-structural determinants are from Healthy People 2030 and provide a macro context of influences on the entire system. Examples include employment opportunities and social mobility (economic stability), housing quality and crime rates (neighborhood & built environment), and discrimination & racism, neighborhood poverty, and segregation (social & community context). Education and health care access & quality include availability and use of high-quality services and supports (e.g., enriched learning experiences, preventive care).

References

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- 2 Varshney, N., Temple, J. A., & Reynolds, A. J. (2022). Early Education and Adult Health: Age 37 Impacts and Economic Benefits of the Child-Parent Center Preschool Program. *Journal of benefit-cost analysis*, 13(1), 57–90. <https://doi.org/10.1017/bca.2022.4>
- 3 Center on the Developing Child (2010). *The Foundations of Lifelong Health Are Built in Early Childhood*. Retrieved from www.developingchild.harvard.edu.
- 4 Magnuson, K. A., & Waldfogel, J. (2005). Early childhood care and education: Effects on ethnic and racial gaps in school readiness. *The Future of Children*, 15(1), 169–196.