



# Research News

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## Early Literacy & Language Skills

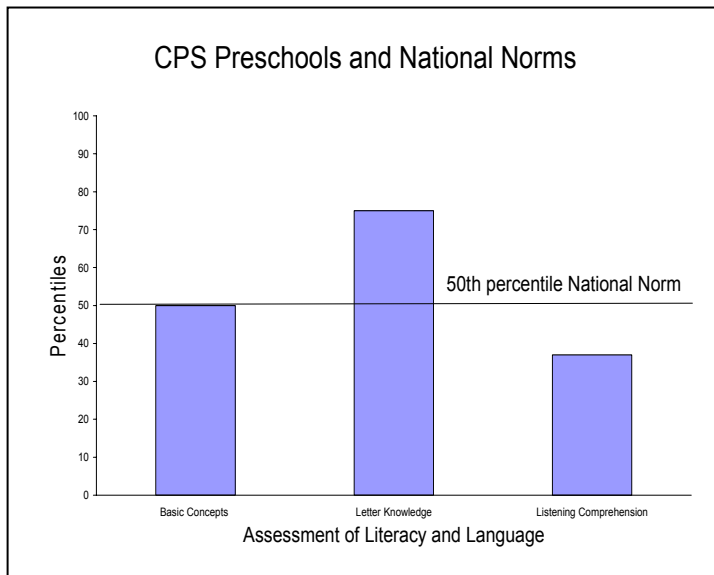
This past year, a number of studies were conducted by the Office of Early Childhood Education (OECE) of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS). Here is a description of the third study and findings. In the spring of 2006, a random sample of about 350 four-year-old children across all CPS preschool programs were assessed on early literacy and language, and phonemic awareness skills.

### Early Literacy & Language

- ▶ Early literacy and language skills were assessed with a nationally standardized norm-referenced test called *Assessment of Literacy and Language* (ALL; PsychCorp, 2005) to compare performance of our preschool children with their same-aged peers nationally. (Unfortunately, ALL currently has only an English version so only English-speaking children were assessed.)
- ▶ CPS preschoolers performed at or above national norms in Basic Concepts (50<sup>th</sup> percentile) and Letter Knowledge (75<sup>th</sup> percentile), but slightly below the national norm in Listening Comprehension (37<sup>th</sup> percentile), but still within the average range.

### Phonemic Awareness

- ▶ The *Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening* (PALS; University of Virginia, 2004) assesses Upper and Lower Case Letter Recognition, Rhyme Awareness, Letter Sounds, and Beginning Sounds.
- ▶ The majority of CPS preschoolers met basic developmental expectations for four-year-old children in the spring of their preschool year for all scales except Beginning Sound Awareness. Results are presented below. (Developmental expectations on these indicators are associated with early reading success).



- ▶ Uppercase Letter Recognition:
  - Seventy-two percent (72%) of the children recognized at least 12 uppercase letters (expectation is 12-21 letters in the spring of the four-year-old's preschool year).
- ▶ Lowercase Letter Recognition:
  - Ninety-five percent (95%) of the children knew at least 9 lowercase letters (developmental expectation is 9-17).
- ▶ Letter Sounds:
  - Seventy-six percent (76%) of the children could recognize and make at least 4 letter sounds, while 49% recognized 8 or more letter sounds (expectation is 4-8 sounds).
- ▶ Rhyme Awareness:
  - Fifty-eight percent (58%) of the children could identify at least 5 rhyming sounds (expectation is 5-7 sounds)

### **Important Implications:**

- ▶ These results show CPS preschools are preparing children with important early literacy readiness skills for kindergarten.
- ▶ Findings also suggest that teachers should review their curricula and integrate more opportunities for children to learn sound-letter relationships.

**We want to know what YOU think! What are your ideas about how to increase children's knowledge in these early literacy domains?**

You may e-mail us at [contactus@ecechicago.org](mailto:contactus@ecechicago.org) or go to the Office of Early Childhood Education Web site under teacher resources: <http://www.ecechicago.org/teacher/> for additional resources.

