

SUMMER BOOST

Challenges and Opportunities in Summer Programs for Rising Kindergarten Students

This is the second in a series of issue briefs on the ExCEL Network. It has been updated since its original publication in October 2017.

There is a growing belief that access to academic opportunities during the summer can help close the achievement gap between low-income students and their higher-income peers. But while significant research is emerging on summer programs for school-age children, information on the preschool period is limited. The Expanding Children's Early Learning (ExCEL) Network brought together practitioners, policymakers, and researchers with the aim of connecting theories about the promise of summer programs preceding kindergarten, existing research about features of effective summer programs for school-age children, and the day-to-day realities of implementing these programs for rising kindergarten students. This brief summarizes lessons learned about three implementation issues — recruitment, attendance, and family involvement — that affect all summer programs but may pose unique challenges and opportunities for programs for rising kindergartners.

School readiness at the start of kindergarten and achievement during the kindergarten year predict student success in later years.¹ Yet many children, particularly those from low-income families, do not start kindergarten with the skills they need to be successful.² In a national survey of kindergarten teachers, over one-third reported that about half of their students, or more, exhibited adjustment problems at the start of kindergarten, with rates being higher in schools located in high-poverty districts and schools serving a high

1 Duncan et al. (2007).

2 Lee and Burkam (2002).

proportion of minority students.³ Young children and their families often find the start of kindergarten to be a challenging time.⁴ Kindergarten can be a markedly different environment from the preschool, child care, or home settings that children have previously experienced, with very different norms for adult-child interactions, higher demands on children’s social-emotional skills, and more formal structures for parent involvement.⁵ For these reasons, the kindergarten transition has been identified as a “sensitive period” in child development when profound positive or negative changes are possible.⁶

Additionally, some research has shown that over the summer, elementary school-age children tend to lose some of the reading and numeracy skills acquired during the academic year,⁷ and losses tend to be greater for children from low-income families than for their more advantaged peers.⁸ This “summer slide” pattern has received less study in early childhood, but there is reason to believe that the summer before kindergarten may be a vulnerable period, when even children who had access to high-quality preschool environments may experience a drop-off in skills.

Interventions delivered during this sensitive period of transition may have a particularly beneficial impact and may be a cost-effective way to mitigate the risks associated with the kindergarten transition.⁹ A brief summer program can help children build basic academic and social skills and equip them with the confidence necessary to benefit from the new relationships, knowledge, and experiences that they will be exposed to as they make the transition to formal schooling. This approach may be especially effective for students who have not previously attended a preschool program. While a summer program certainly is no substitute for a high-quality academic year preschool experience, academic summer programs may provide a helpful boost to children who would otherwise enter kindergarten without any formal schooling. Despite the promise of summer kindergarten transition programs, however, few studies have rigorously assessed such interventions.¹⁰

Moreover, although there is substantial research available to policymakers and practitioners interested in summer learning programs for elementary school-age children, guidance is limited on what it takes to implement summer programs for younger children.¹¹ This brief presents findings

3 Rimm-Kaufman, Pianta, and Cox (2000).

4 McIntyre et al. (2007).

5 Rimm-Kaufman and Pianta (2000).

6 Rimm-Kaufman and Pianta (2000).

7 Atteberry and McEachin (2016).

8 Downey, von Hippel, and Broh (2004); Alexander, Entwisle, and Olson (2001). There is some recent debate in the education field about the extent to which the summer learning loss phenomenon holds true. Some of the data used to establish patterns of summer learning loss are quite old, and some of the more recent data show conflicting findings regarding the extent of summer learning loss and the seasonal pattern of achievement gaps. See, for example, Quinn, Cooc, McIntyre, and Gomez (2016).

9 Pears et al. (2014); Bailey, Duncan, Odgers, and Yu (2016).

10 One study that has done so is Pears et al. (2013).

11 Augustine et al. (2016); McCombs et al. (2011).

on programs for rising kindergartners from the Expanding Children’s Early Learning (ExCEL) Network, a partnership of local stakeholders

engaged in innovation and evidence building. (See Box 1 for more information about the ExCEL Network.)

BOX 1

THE ExCEL NETWORK

The Expanding Children’s Early Learning (ExCEL) Network is a collaboration led by MDRC, a nonprofit, nonpartisan education and social policy research organization. ExCEL is engaging local officials, preschool providers, and researchers as active partners in innovation and evidence-building, while also benefiting from the contributions of other experts in the policymaking, practitioner, and advocacy communities.

The ExCEL Network seeks to produce an integrated body of work to rigorously examine approaches that can play a key role in the successful expansion of preschool programs. With anchor funding from the Laura and John Arnold Foundation, the ExCEL Network is undertaking two projects (ExCEL P-3 and ExCEL Quality) to examine fundamental questions related to the effectiveness of interventions for low-income children of prekindergarten age:

- How do we sustain positive outcomes for children from preschool programs into the elementary grades and beyond?
- What is the right combination of curricula and teacher professional development to improve preschool instructional quality and maximize positive child outcomes?

ExCEL P-3 takes advantage of a unique opportunity in the Boston Public Schools to confirm whether a preschool program that combines evidence-based curricula with coaching and professional development for teachers, reinforced by system-wide alignment of instruction into elementary school, will produce sustained improvements in a range of student outcomes. ExCEL P-3 is currently collecting information on children’s skills as they enter kindergarten to examine the initial impacts of the Boston Public Schools preschool program.

ExCEL Quality will focus on ways to combine curricula and teacher training and coaching to strengthen preschool instruction and child outcomes. The project may use a comprehensive program (such as Creative Curriculum or HighScope) or a standard preschool curriculum enhanced with one or two evidence-based, domain-specific curricula. In either case, intensive professional development will involve ongoing teacher training reinforced by regular in-class coaching. The evaluation will answer key implementation, impact, and cost-effectiveness questions with data collected on child outcomes in preschool, with the possibility of further follow-up research.

All ExCEL Network projects will collect data on common measures, and an active learning network will identify and share practical lessons as the program operations unfold and research findings emerge. The ExCEL Network will also be a resource for other districts, cities, and states throughout the country seeking evidence-based practices.

DEVELOPING THE ExCEL SUMMER LEARNING NETWORK

In 2016, the ExCEL team initiated a summer learning network to bring together practitioners, policymakers, and researchers who have developed or are interested in developing summer programs for rising kindergarten students. This effort sought to bridge the gaps between theories about the promise of summer programs preceding kindergarten, existing research about features of effective summer programs for school-age children, and the day-to-day realities of implementing these programs for rising kindergarten students.

This brief summarizes what the ExCEL team has learned about three particular implementation issues — recruitment, attendance, and meaningful family involvement — that affect all summer programs but may pose unique challenges and opportunities to programs for rising kindergartners. The ExCEL team gathered this information through (a) direct experience, by partnering with Long Beach Unified School District to pilot a six-week summer kindergarten transition program; (b) review of publicly available material about summer programs for rising kindergarten students; and (c) semistructured interviews with multiple representative providers of summer programs and initiatives for rising kindergarten students. See Table 1 (page 9) for information about the programs reviewed for this brief.

ISSUE 1: RECRUITMENT

Many summer programs and preschools face challenges in recruiting families and enrolling students. A number of factors pose barriers to parents' access to programs, including a lack of information (or misinformation) about local opportunities, misalignment between the program's content and parent preferences, and logistical challenges such as transportation or managing the schedules of multiple children.¹² Such barriers for parents affect recruitment for any summer program, but particularly those serving very young children and those targeting children who have not previously attended a preschool.

An added challenge for recruitment of rising kindergarten students is that unlike school-age children, they may not be connected to formal school structures that could facilitate recruitment. For example, many children attend home day care centers or do not attend any formal preschool or day care program before kindergarten entry.¹³ Even when children are enrolled in publicly subsidized preschool (for example, Head Start or state-funded prekindergarten), the diversity of agencies overseeing preschool programs in a locality can make it more challenging to identify eligible students and disseminate information to them.

Addressing Recruitment Challenges

Raise public awareness about the availability and benefits of the programs through public service announcements, fliers, and automated phone calls

¹² Condliffe (2016); Tang, Coley, and Votruba-Drzal (2012).

¹³ It is estimated that in 2016, 43 percent of 4-year-olds in the United States were served by publicly funded preschool programs (Barnett et al. 2017).

Conduct door-to-door canvassing and individual outreach

Make use of preschool and kindergarten application processes to identify eligible children

Hire staff members dedicated to recruitment and begin the process early in the spring

Community-wide efforts to raise public awareness about a program include billboards, automated calls, public service announcements, and fliers targeting a wide range of families. Programs such as Horizons National and the Kids in Transition to School program (KITS) noted that getting established as a known and trusted institution in the community is an important component of recruitment, but this can take some time. One promising approach is to expand an existing, well-known summer program for school-age children to include younger children — or to partner with such a program to raise awareness about new programs that include rising kindergarten students.

Door-to-door canvassing and individual outreach in widely used community spaces is cited as a particularly valuable way to find and recruit hard-to-reach families who did not participate in preschool. This approach is used by many of the programs in the learning network, including Georgia's Summer Transition Program, Oakland's Summer Pre-K program, Stretch to Kindergarten, KITS, and the Boston Early Focus program. However, personal outreach is a potentially costly endeavor. To address this challenge, some programs develop partnerships with established community organizations (such as medical clinics and food assistance centers) to raise awareness and recruit new students to their programs.

Programs may also take advantage of the preschool and kindergarten application processes. For

example, in previous years, Boston Public Schools asked in its kindergarten application whether a child had attended preschool, then shared this information with its Early Focus summer program for rising kindergartners to help with recruitment. And in Georgia's urban areas, where the demand for preschool is greater than the capacity of the public preschool programs, sites participating in the Georgia Summer Transition Program use preschool waiting lists for recruitment. Neither of these tactics can substitute for canvassing, however. The families who are hardest to reach may not sign up for preschool at all and may not enroll their children in kindergarten until the summer before it starts, when summer programs have already begun.

Staffing to address recruitment is a critical consideration for summer programs, particularly those hoping to serve students not yet connected to school. Programs that recruit students who have not attended preschool typically have staff members dedicated to recruitment and begin the process early in the spring. Springboard Collaborative, a summer program for pre-K through Grade 3 that operates in six different districts across the country, helps school sites hire enrollment specialists. Specialists are assigned recruitment targets and given incentives to meet their goals. Similarly, Georgia's Summer Transition Program funds transition coaches who work in the community to identify children who are eligible to participate.

ISSUE 2: ATTENDANCE

Summer programs typically face two types of attendance issues — children who are registered for the program initially but never show up and children who have inconsistent attendance during the summer. Low attendance for voluntary summer programs is a major problem that has been explored in the literature on summer programs

for elementary school students.¹⁴ Researchers who evaluated two years of such programs in five urban districts found that academic outcomes were stronger for students with higher attendance, but avoiding a drop-off between enrollment and the start of the summer program and maintaining strong attendance throughout the program were key challenges for many school districts.¹⁵ Many of the difficulties faced by summer programs for school-age children and the tactics for addressing them apply to summer programs for rising kindergarten students as well.¹⁶ But parents probably play a larger role in attendance with very young children, who cannot take themselves to school. Therefore, approaches to address attendance in programs for young children must engage the entire family.

Addressing Attendance Challenges

Actively engage families during the time between recruitment and the start of the program

Overenroll programs to account for drop-off

Predict and address families' logistical barriers, for example by providing transportation or a full day of child care

Provide incentives for families to achieve strong attendance

To prevent drop-off between enrollment and start of the program, programs in the learning network made efforts to actively engage families. For exam-

ple, Horizons National sites host family nights before the start of the program. Other programs plan for a drop-off by overenrolling programs at the outset; Boston Public Schools typically overenrolled its Early Focus program by 30 percent to 50 percent each year.

Another important consideration for addressing attendance issues is how to identify and support families in overcoming common attendance barriers. For example, a lack of transportation can be a significant barrier for low-income families. Some programs in the learning network provide transportation as a key component of their model. Another problem faced by working families is the need for a full day of child care. Some summer programs (such as Freedom School Partners, Boston Early Focus, and Stretch to Kindergarten) are designed to last a full school day in part to address this need. Some programs build partnerships with other providers to cover a full working day at a single site (such as Judy Centers Summer Program in Baltimore), and others (such as KITS) transport children from the summer program to other child care settings.

Finally, setting a clear attendance policy and providing incentives for families to maintain strong attendance is another approach summer programs for young children employ. The Greater Rochester Summer Learning Association's Summer Leap program has a policy that children cannot miss more than three days of the program. This policy is made clear to families at the start of the program, calls home are made at each absence, and families are visited at home if they are approaching a

¹⁴ Augustine et al. (2016).

¹⁵ Augustine et al. (2016); McCombs et al. (2014).

¹⁶ See Augustine et al. (2016) for attendance challenges faced by voluntary summer programs for older elementary school students and the approaches districts used to address those challenges.

violation. Program administrators note that this visit is intended not to penalize families but to help staff members ascertain the family commitment and build upon the relationship. Programs such as KITS and Springboard Collaborative provide incentives (for example, raffle tickets for prizes) for parent and student attendance.

ISSUE 3: MEANINGFUL FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Family involvement in children’s education is positively associated with children’s academic success, including their successful transition to kindergarten.¹⁷ Children participating in summer programs before they begin kindergarten can benefit from family involvement in a number of ways. First, effectively involving families during summer programs can help ensure strong student attendance throughout the school year. It can also potentially magnify the effects of the programs on students’ academic and social-emotional skill development by providing families with ways to work with their children at home toward the goals of the program. Finally, the transition into kindergarten offers an important opportunity to support the development of parents’ knowledge, skills, and confidence about how best to aid children’s progress in school and how to engage effectively with the school organization.¹⁸ A key challenge for family engagement activities during any season is that busy parents may find the sessions difficult to attend because of inflexible work schedules or the need to care for other children.

Approaches to Family Involvement

Provide a curriculum for parents to accompany the children’s curriculum

Provide information and support to families on issues of school engagement and the kindergarten transition

Address the logistical difficulties parents may face in attending activities

Provide other social services to families at the summer program site

Several programs provide a curriculum for parents to help them support what their children are learning in the program. Springboard Collaborative focuses on children’s literacy development over the summer and requires that parents attend a weekly workshop. The workshop introduces parents to the literacy skills their children are working on in school and equips them with tools (including activities and books) to encourage those skills at home. Parents are also invited into their children’s classroom over the summer to practice supporting their children in an environment where teachers can offer feedback. The KITS program includes weekly parent workshops as part of its model as well. Not only do these workshops help parents learn how to foster their children’s literacy skills; they also introduce parents to the behavior management practices used by KITS teachers in the children’s summer program — practices intended to support children’s development of critical self-regulation and social skills, such as cooperation and sharing.

¹⁷ Van Voorhis, Maier, Epstein, and Lloyd (2013).

¹⁸ Van Voorhis, Maier, Epstein, and Lloyd (2013).

A summer program for rising kindergarten students offers a unique and well-timed opportunity to provide information and support to families on issues of school engagement, including how to advocate for services for their children at school, how to communicate and engage with school staff members, and what to expect during the kindergarten transition. This information is particularly relevant for families who have not yet had a child in the school system and immigrant families who have not yet experienced U.S. public schools. Supporting children through the kindergarten transition and engaging with the school during the school year are topics covered by KITS and Georgia's Summer Transition Program, among others.

Programs hoping to include family activities will need to address the logistical challenges presented by daytime events that conflict with parents' work or child care demands. Promising tactics used by programs in the learning network include offering home visits or phone calls when a parent can't make a session, scheduling parent events during non-working hours, providing free child care for young children during the parent session, and allowing alternate caregivers (such as grandparents) to attend in place of a primary caregiver when necessary.

In addition to giving families the opportunity to learn alongside their children, summer programs can also support child development by providing other social services at the program site. First 5 Alameda's Summer Pre-K Program model includes provision of family services as a critical component of its model and brings in experts to teach parents about such topics as nutrition and child safety.¹⁹ Some summer programs, such as CAP

Tulsa's Summer U program and Baltimore's Judy Centers, operate within the context of larger social service agencies, allowing them to offer the parents of participating children family support services in areas such as job training and health.

SUMMARY

Summer programs for rising kindergarten students have the potential to make meaningful and lasting impacts. But while much progress has been made in recent years in identifying effective components of district-run, voluntary summer programs for school-age children,²⁰ there is limited research available for policymakers and practitioners interested in designing and implementing similar programs for younger children. While many of the implementation lessons from school-age programs probably apply, summer programs for rising kindergarten students face particular implementation challenges in the areas of recruitment and attendance and have unique opportunities regarding family involvement. The programs in the ExCEL summer learning network have implemented innovative approaches to address these challenges and opportunities.

¹⁹ First 5 Alameda County (2014).

²⁰ Augustine et al. (2016); McCombs et al. (2014); McCombs et al. (2011).

TABLE 1

PROGRAMS REVIEWED FOR THE EXCEL SUMMER LEARNING NETWORK

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM	PROGRAM LOCATIONS	TARGETS CHILDREN WITH LIMITED PRESCHOOL EXPERIENCE	NUMBER OF RISING KINDERGARTNERS SERVED (2017)	WEBSITE
Baltimore Judy Centers	Judy Centers are housed in Baltimore City Public Schools' neighborhood elementary schools. They run year-round and offer full- and part-day services to families with young children. Curriculum varies by site. Judy Centers also sponsor family engagement activities throughout the year.	Baltimore (MD)	No	130	http://www.baltimorecityschools.org/Page/25508
Boston Summer Early Focus	Boston Public Schools (BPS) hosts a 5-week summer program, Summer Early Focus, for students entering kindergarten through 3rd grade. The program runs 9 hours per day and is managed by the BPS Department of Early Childhood in collaboration with community partners. For rising kindergarten students, BPS has adapted its Focus on K1 academic-year preschool curriculum for the summer months. The program includes parent workshops to support parents in navigating the BPS system during the child's kindergarten year.	Boston (MA)	In past years, Boston Summer Early Focus targeted students with no K1 (preschool) experience. In the summer of 2017, the program targeted high-need students with and without K1 experience who were attending low-performing schools.	103	https://sites.google.com/bostonpublicschools.org/earlychildhood/summer-early-focus
Building Educated Leaders for Life (BELL)	BELL is a national nonprofit offering summer programming for students through 8th grade. In 2016 BELL expanded its elementary school summer program to include a 5-week program that runs 5 days a week for rising kindergarten students. The length of the program day varies by site, ranging from 5 hours per day to 8 hours. The program targets students in underresourced communities. The BELL pre-K program curriculum is adapted from the Big Day for Pre-K curriculum; pre- and postprogram assessments are key components of the model. The parent engagement component of BELL includes events at the start, middle, and end of the summer focused on educating parents on the goals of the program. Some programs also send weekly newsletters to support parent engagement.	San Mateo County (CA), Charlotte (NC), Baltimore (MD)	Varies by location	555	http://www.experiencebell.org/

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM	PROGRAM LOCATIONS	TARGETS CHILDREN WITH LIMITED PRESCHOOL EXPERIENCE	NUMBER OF RISING KINDERGARTNERS SERVED (2017)	WEBSITE
Community Action Project of Tulsa County (CAP Tulsa) Summer U	CAP Tulsa hosts an 8-week program for its pre-K students called Summer U. CAP Tulsa uses Creative Curriculum and Building Blocks as its primary curricula during the academic year and has created a customized curriculum for the summer. Families enrolled in CAP Tulsa's early education program have access to a wide variety of family support services, including career training and parenting workshops.	Tulsa (OK)	No	200	http://captulsa.org/get-involved/summeru/
First 5 Alameda County	First 5 Alameda County's School Readiness Initiative offers funding for summer pre-K programs that run 5 days a week for 5 to 6 weeks over the summer. First 5 Alameda offers a framework for providers (schools or community-based organizations, or CBOs) to follow but does not offer a set curriculum. Each site hosts 5 hours of parent workshops over the summer.	Alameda County (CA)	Yes	102	http://www.first5alameda.org/
Freedom School Partners	Freedom School Partners is a 6-week program for elementary and middle school students that operates 5 days a week for 7 hours a day. Freedom School Partners uses the Integrated Reading Curriculum provided by the Children's Defense Fund. It does not have a program for rising kindergarten students but is interested in piloting one during the summer of 2018.	Charlotte (NC)	No	None	http://freedom-schoolpartners.org/
Georgia's Pre-K Summer Transition Program (STP)	STP is a 6-week summer program administered by Georgia's Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL). The program runs 5 days a week for 6.5 hours a day. The programs use the Opening the World of Learning (OWL) Curriculum. At least one parent workshop is held each week to focus on topics of interest and need for families.	Georgia	Yes	2,336	http://www.decal.ga.gov/Prek/SummerTransitionProgram.aspx

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM	PROGRAM LOCATIONS	TARGETS CHILDREN WITH LIMITED PRESCHOOL EXPERIENCE	NUMBER OF RISING KINDERGARTNERS SERVED (2017)	WEBSITE
Greater Rochester Summer Learning Association (GRSLA)	GRSLA organizes a 6-week summer program that runs 5 days a week for 6.5 hours a day for students from age 3 through 11th grade. The program is housed in CBOs, colleges, and private independent schools over the summer and uses HighScope as the curriculum for 3- and 4-year-olds. The program keeps an open-door policy for families, and parents are encouraged to participate in the children's classrooms. The GRSLA consortium includes three Horizons National affiliate programs (see below).	Rochester (NY)	No	255	http://www.summerleap.net/
Horizons National	Horizons National is a 6-week summer program that also offers after-school and weekend supports throughout the year. The summer learning program (offered 5 days a week for 6 hours a day) operates on the campuses of independent schools, colleges, and universities across the country and serves students from pre-K to grade 12. The curriculum varies by site. Many Horizons providers include a parental engagement component to assist parents as they support their early learners.	Over 50 sites in 17 states	No	90	https://www.horizonsnational.org/
Indiana United Way Kindergarten Countdown Camps	Kindergarten Countdown Camps are hosted by United Ways across Indiana with many partially funded by subgrants from Indiana United Ways. In most counties, the camps are 3- to 4-week half-day programs that aim to support children's kindergarten readiness. Camps are generally hosted in school buildings and staffed by certified preschool or kindergarten teachers. The student curriculum and family involvement strategies vary by site.	Indiana	Yes	Indiana United Way funded approximately 1,540 seats (77 classrooms of 20 children) in 2017	http://www.iauuw.org/index.htm

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM	PROGRAM LOCATIONS	TARGETS CHILDREN WITH LIMITED PRESCHOOL EXPERIENCE	NUMBER OF RISING KINDERGARTNERS SERVED (2017)	WEBSITE
Kids In Transition to School (KITS)	KITS is a kindergarten readiness program developed by Oregon Social Learning Center that operates for 8 weeks during the summer before kindergarten, with two to three 2-hour sessions per week for students and weekly parent sessions. Once the school year starts, there is one 2-hour session per week for 4 weeks. The KITS curriculum focuses on development of children's social, self-regulation, early literacy, and math skills. Parent sessions focus on encouraging learning at home, positive parenting skills, and parental involvement in school. Child care for siblings of enrolled children is offered during parent sessions.	Lane County (OR)	No	470	http://www.kidsintransitiontoschool.org/
Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) Pilot	This pilot program was developed through a partnership between LBUSD and MDRG. It ran 6 hours a day for 6 weeks and served students entering kindergarten who had or had not already had a formal preschool experience. The program adapted Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's Big Day for Pre-K curriculum for use in the summer and also included weekly parenting workshops.	Long Beach (CA)	Yes	48	
New Mexico K-3 Plus	The K-3 Plus program extends the school year for kindergarten through 3rd-grade students by 25 instructional days during the preceding summer in eligible schools. Eligible schools include schools in which 80% or more of the students are eligible for free or reduced-fee lunch at the time the school applies for the program and elementary schools with a D or F grade in a prior year. Participating districts determine a theme for the summer program and establish aligned curricula to be followed by all school sites participating in the K-3 program. Daily instruction must include 90 minutes of math and 90 minutes of literacy, as well as additional interventions for students who need it using the Response to Intervention (RTI) framework for math and literacy. Parent engagement activities vary across districts.	New Mexico	Yes	5,234	http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/LiteracyEarlyChildhoodEd_K3plus_index.html

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM	PROGRAM LOCATIONS	TARGETS CHILDREN WITH LIMITED PRESCHOOL EXPERIENCE	NUMBER OF RISING KINDERGARTNERS SERVED (2017)	WEBSITE
Oakland Summer Pre-K Program (SPK)	SPK is a half-day summer program that runs 4 weeks in the summer. The program uses a play-based curriculum as a vehicle for learning and developing skills necessary for kindergarten or transitional kindergarten, which is offered to children who just miss the age cutoff for kindergarten. Family engagement is an integral part of programming: Families participate through home or site visits, weekly family workshops, and parent-teacher conferences at the end of the program.	Oakland (CA)	Yes	65	https://www.ousd.org/Page/14363
Pittsburgh Kindergarten Readiness Program (KRP)	KRP is a 2-week program for 6 hours per day offered to children attending preschool at Pittsburgh Public Schools. The program was designed to help children make a smooth transition between the early childhood program and kindergarten. In the summer of 2017, the program used units from the Big Day for Pre-K curriculum.	Pittsburgh (PA)	No	117	https://www.pps.k12.pa.us/domain/262
Portland Early Kindergarten Transition Program	Portland Public Schools' Kindergarten and Early Learning office runs the program with on-site coordination by the county's Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) Services. The half-day program runs for three weeks during the summer. Two parent sessions are held each week during the kindergarten sessions, and child care is provided for other children in the family. The program focuses on building positive family-school staff relationships and supporting school success in the home. Children practice classroom routines and expectations while learning self-regulation and social-emotional skills.	Portland (OR)	Yes	About 260	https://www.pps.net/Page/1545

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM	PROGRAM LOCATIONS	TARGETS CHILDREN WITH LIMITED PRESCHOOL EXPERIENCE	NUMBER OF RISING KINDERGARTNERS SERVED (2017)	WEBSITE
Seattle's Family and Education Levy Summer Learning	CBOs and schools can apply to this funding stream to offer a summer learning program to students from kindergarten through grade 12. The programs for rising kindergarten students must operate for a minimum of 120 hours over the summer and provide both academic instruction and enrichment activities. Programs must offer a minimum of 10 hours of academic instruction per week focused on social-emotional, physical, language, literacy, cognitive, and mathematics domains in the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment system. Enrichment activities should provide engaging opportunities to build important academic skills and to foster other skills that support learning. Curriculum and parent engagement strategies vary by site.	Seattle (WA)	Yes	232	http://www.seattle.gov/education/all-programs/about-us/about-the-levy
Springboard Collaborative	A 5-week summer learning program, Springboard Summer, combines daily reading instruction for prekindergartners through 3rd-graders; weekly workshops training parents to teach reading at home; and an incentive structure that awards learning tools to families — from books to tablets — in proportion to their children's reading progress. Springboard trains teachers to deliver the curriculum, which is data driven and focused on improving students' literacy skills. Home visits before the start of the program are also a critical component of the Springboard model.	Oakland (CA); Philadelphia (PA); Washington (DC); New York (NY); San Francisco (CA); San Jose (CA)	Varies by site	220	http://springboardcollaborative.org/

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM	PROGRAM LOCATIONS	TARGETS CHILDREN WITH LIMITED PRESCHOOL EXPERIENCE	NUMBER OF RISING KINDERGARTNERS SERVED (2017)	WEBSITE
Stretch to Kindergarten (STK)	STK is a program for low-income families. The majority of children served are dual language learners whose parents have low levels of educational attainment. STK offers a full day of programming for rising kindergarten students. The purpose of STK is to cultivate strong partnerships among families, schools, and the community with the goal of giving children with no preschool experience the skills and support to successfully make the transition into kindergarten. The curriculum for children is project-based. There are both optional and mandatory sessions for parents to attend.	Bay Area (CA)	Yes	140	
United Way of Porter County Kinder Camp	Kinder Camp is hosted by United Way of Porter County, Indiana. Kinder Camp runs for 3 weeks for 4 hours a day. Camps are hosted in school buildings and staffed by certified kindergarten teachers. The student curriculum, which emphasizes science and math, was created through funding from ArcelorMittal, using adaptations from various other pre-K curricula. The camps have implemented a parent component that engages families through communications and events before, during, and after the program.	Indiana (Valparaiso, Portage, Hebron, Chesterton)	Yes	164	http://uwpcsteam.org

Sources: Information was gathered through phone conversations with program stakeholders from fall 2016 to summer 2017. Total numbers of children served by the programs during the summer of 2017 were obtained by MDRC from program contacts in August 2017.

Note: The programs reviewed for this brief were found through reviews of the literature and references from practitioners and experts in the field. The table is intended to provide an overview of program models for rising kindergarten students; it is not an exhaustive list of available programs.

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