

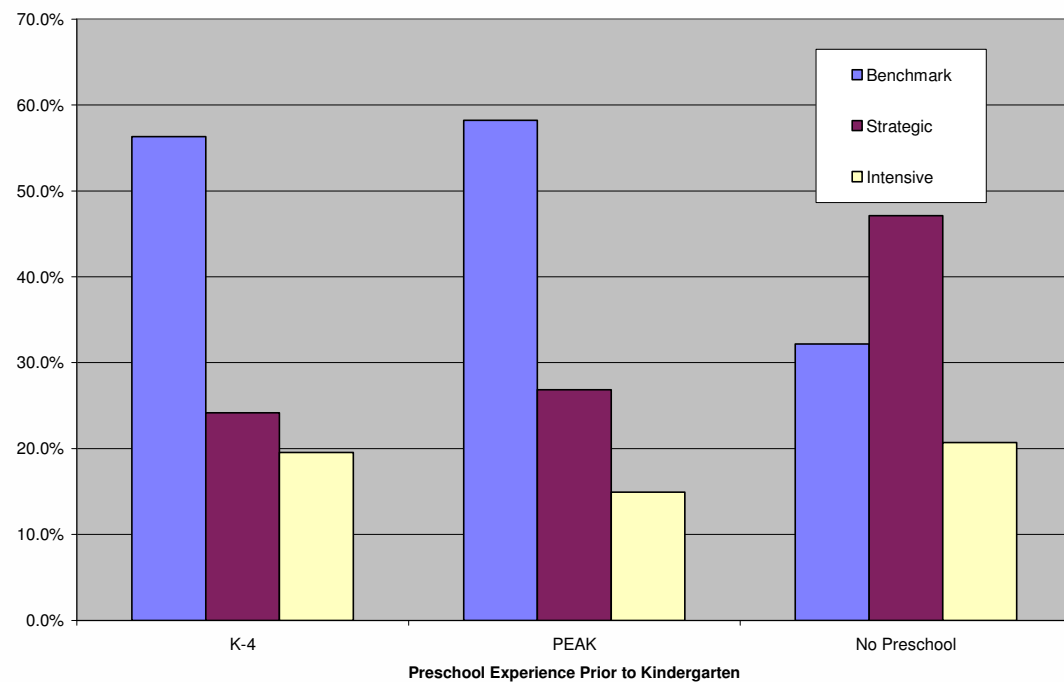
**The Impact of PEAK on School Readiness
Fall 2008**

Pottstown School District administers the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy) assessment to all students entering kindergarten for the purpose of measuring early literacy skills. Teachers use the DIBELS data to provide varying levels of support based on the identified risk category. The students are rated as Benchmark (on target with skills needed to be successful); Strategic (some risk) or Intensive (at risk).

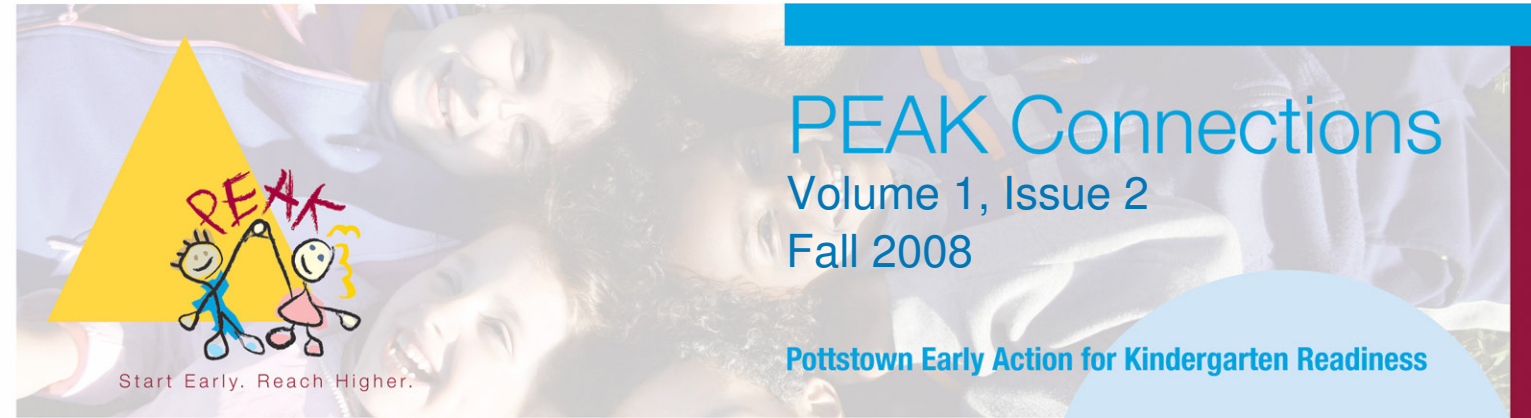
In the fall of 2008, 241 students were rated and matched with the type of prior preschool experience: 1) Pottstown School District K-4 program, 2) PEAK (all partner classrooms in child care and Head Start) and 3) No Preschool.

Comparison of Pottstown School District, PEAK and No Preschool Students

DIBELS Percentages for Entering Kindergarten Students




The PEAK community children are on target with needed skills upon entry in kindergarten with 58% of the children enrolled in community partner programs scoring at the Benchmark level. PEAK's quality improvement efforts and the expansion of Pre-K Counts will mean a higher percentage of children at Benchmark in 2009-2010. With the new outreach to the Family, Friend, Neighbor providers, PEAK will begin impacting the "No Preschool" group which will lead to increased readiness for more children in Pottstown. While the PEAK partnership is making a difference for many children entering kindergarten, PEAK's mission is "Every child in Pottstown will enter kindergarten ready to learn and achieve"; therefore, PEAK will continue to pursue a variety of strategies for reaching out and impacting families so that all children are scoring at Benchmark upon entering kindergarten.



PEAK Expands Impact in Pottstown

PEAK's work in Pottstown to improve school readiness received a boost in July with the approval of the Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Partnership's expansion request. A new class was funded and is administered by Montgomery County Head Start. The new Head Start class located at the Pottstown School District Administration Building joins the other Pre-K Counts partners of Montgomery Early Learning Centers, KinderCare Learning Center, Pottstown YMCA, YWCA Tri-County Area and Warwick Child Care Center. With the additional funding, Pottstown now serves 126 three and four year old children in a full day program at six community partner sites.


With the addition of PA Pre-K Counts, Montgomery County Head Start now serves 96 children in Pottstown.

The PEAK Pre-K Counts classes benefit from the comprehensive nature of the initiative that includes a full-time Pre-K Coach, Early Childhood Health Specialist and Family Engagement Specialist. The support of the PEAK staff allows the community partner programs to provide a high quality program that exceeds the state standards. Pre-K Counts is funded through the Pennsylvania Department of Education and serves 11,800 children statewide.

PEAK Receives Children's Trust Fund Grant

The PEAK partnership was one of six programs in the state to receive a three-year grant from the Pennsylvania Children's Trust Fund. The \$135,000 grant will be provided over three years and will be used to implement PEAK's "Strengthening Families Initiative." The grant will enable the program to focus on increasing family engagement support through collaboration with the Pottstown Family Center and provide behavior management help to community programs through collaboration with the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit.

Dollars from the Children's Trust Fund will be combined with funds from United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania to support the full-time "family engagement specialist" who provides resources, workshops, activities and referrals for families with young children.

The collaboration with the Intermediate Unit provides in-classroom assistance to teachers and families dealing with behavior problems in preschool-aged children.

- PEAK Managing Partners**
- Pottstown School District
 - Montgomery Early Learning Centers
 - Montgomery County Head Start
 - Pottstown Family YMCA
 - YWCA Tri-County Area
 - Montgomery County Intermediate Unit
 - Pottstown Family Center
 - Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation
 - United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania

- PEAK Community Partners**
- Montgomery County Child Care Consortium
 - Pottstown Public Library
 - Penn State Cooperative Extension
 - Southeast Regional Key Grace Lutheran Preschool
 - Congregation Mercy and Truth HENS Preschool
 - KinderCare Learning Center
 - Warwick Child Care Center

 **Pottstown Early Action for Kindergarten Readiness**


Pottstown School District
230 Beech Street
PO Box 779
Pottstown, PA 19464
610-970-6655
Fax: 610-326-6540
www.peakonline.org
Email: mrieck@potttownsd.org

- Mary Rieck, PEAK Coordinator
- Emily Baddeley, Pre-K Coach
- Whitney Tyng, Family Engagement Specialist
- Kathy Perry, Early Childhood Health Specialist
- Sue Yocom, Resource Development Specialist
- Jeff Sparagana Ed D, Director of Education and Human Resources

PEAK Mission
Every child in Pottstown will enter Kindergarten ready to learn and achieve.

Pottstown Represented on Two State ECE Councils

Pottstown is represented on two new state councils established by Governor Ed Rendell to focus on early education. Tim Phelps, President of the TriCounty Chamber of Commerce, was appointed to the Pennsylvania Early Learning Investment Commission. The purpose of the commission is to secure support for public investment in early learning by focusing on practices that are educationally, economically and scientifically sound. Dr. Jeff Sparagana, Director of Education and Human Resources, was appointed to the Pennsylvania Early Learning Council. The purpose of the Early Learning Council is to plan for the expansion of effective early learning and development services for young children and their families, and to make recommendations to ensure the plans are implemented successfully.


 Tim Phelps and Dr. Jeff Sparagana appointed to Early Learning Investment Commission and Early Learning Council.

The appointment of Mr. Phelps and Dr. Sparagana to Governor Rendell's councils recognizes their leadership in the field of early education and underscores the importance of the work in Pottstown.

Pottstown YMCA-STAR 3

Pottstown YMCA was designated a Keystone STAR 3 site by the Pennsylvania Southeast Regional Key. Keystone STARS is the continuous quality improvement for early learning programs in Pennsylvania. There are four STAR levels that denote quality in the area of the education and training of staff, instructional environment, the leadership/management and family/community partnerships. Congratulations to the staff of the YMCA for achieving STAR 3.

New Outreach to Family, Friend, Neighbor Providers

PEAK is collaborating with United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania and Montgomery County Child Care Information Services to begin an outreach to the regulation exempt Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN) providers in the Borough of Pottstown. There are over 50 FFN providers in Pottstown caring for young children. PEAK will work with the providers to improve school readiness through resources, professional development, and mentoring. Through this outreach PEAK will be able to impact more children and families in Pottstown.

PEAK Announces Mini-Grant Winners

Five PEAK community teachers will receive mini-grants of \$500 each for classroom projects designed to improve instruction. The PEAK Mini-Grant Program was made possible through funding from United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania and was open to any teacher in the PEAK partner programs. The teachers had to develop a project, create a budget and obtain a recommendation. The submitted applications were reviewed by a panel of experts and decisions made in late November. The winners of the mini-grants are:

Jamie Roshon—KinderCare Learning Center

Learning through Science

Barbara Ward—KinderCare Learning Center

Learning Math Can be Fun

Jennifer Martin—Tot Spot Preschool

Sensory Integration

Nichole Kucharek—Tot Spot Preschool

Gross Motor Skill Development

Theresa Randle—Pottstown YMCA

Outdoor Play Yard

What is happening in 2008-2009?

Community Outreach

- Collaboration with TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce for business and civic outreach
- Month of Young Child outreach and events
- Media campaign
- Community events to stress early education
- Web site resources and outreach

Family Engagement

- Family workshops
- PEAK Breakfast Clubs
- Resources and referrals
- Family Resource Centers

Quality Improvement/Work Force Development

- On-site support and mentoring
- Directors' Support Group
- Monthly newsletters and other resources
- Professional development
- Child Development Associate Credential class
- BS class through Eastern University
- Teacher mini-grants
- Recruitment and retention strategies
- Outreach to regulation exempt Family, Friend, Neighbor providers

Health, Wellness, Behavioral

- On-site support and mentoring
- Professional development
- Collaboration with Cedar Crest College senior-level nursing students
- Outreach to medical professionals with Family Fun Packs
- Vision and hearing screenings
- Lead screenings
- Keystone Color Me Healthy curriculum
- Preschool PATHS--social and emotional curriculum
- On-site behavior management support through Montgomery County Intermediate Unit
- Collaboration with Devereux Early Childhood for behavior assessment and support

Kindergarten Transition

- Joint professional development between kindergarten teachers and community teachers
- "Buddy School" activities between community programs and kindergarten classes
- Summer transition book bags
- Summer kindergarten orientation
- Transfer of assessment information to kindergarten

Contact the PEAK Coordinator for more information on how to get involved .

PEAK Funding 2008-2009

United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania



PA Pre-K Counts



Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation



Children's Trust Fund



Pottstown School District

PEAK is a collaboration of Pottstown School District and community organizations that are working together to design and implement strategies that enable children to enter kindergarten ready to learn. PEAK focuses its work in five inter-related areas: community outreach, family engagement, quality improvement, kindergarten transition and health/wellness. PEAK's overarching goal is to build an infrastructure that ensures all children in Pottstown enter kindergarten ready to learn and achieve.