

State Pre-K Programs: What Do We Know?

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Pre-K project conference

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Pre-K Growth: How Did We Get Here?

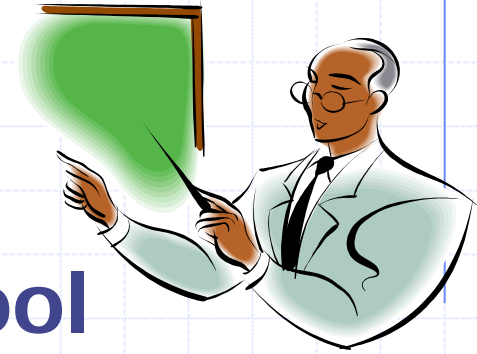
1960: 10 percent of 3- and 4-year-olds in a preschool program

2005: 69 percent in 3- and 4-year-olds in a preschool program

State funding: \$2.84 billion

Per-child funding: \$3,551

Pre-K Effectiveness: Model Programs

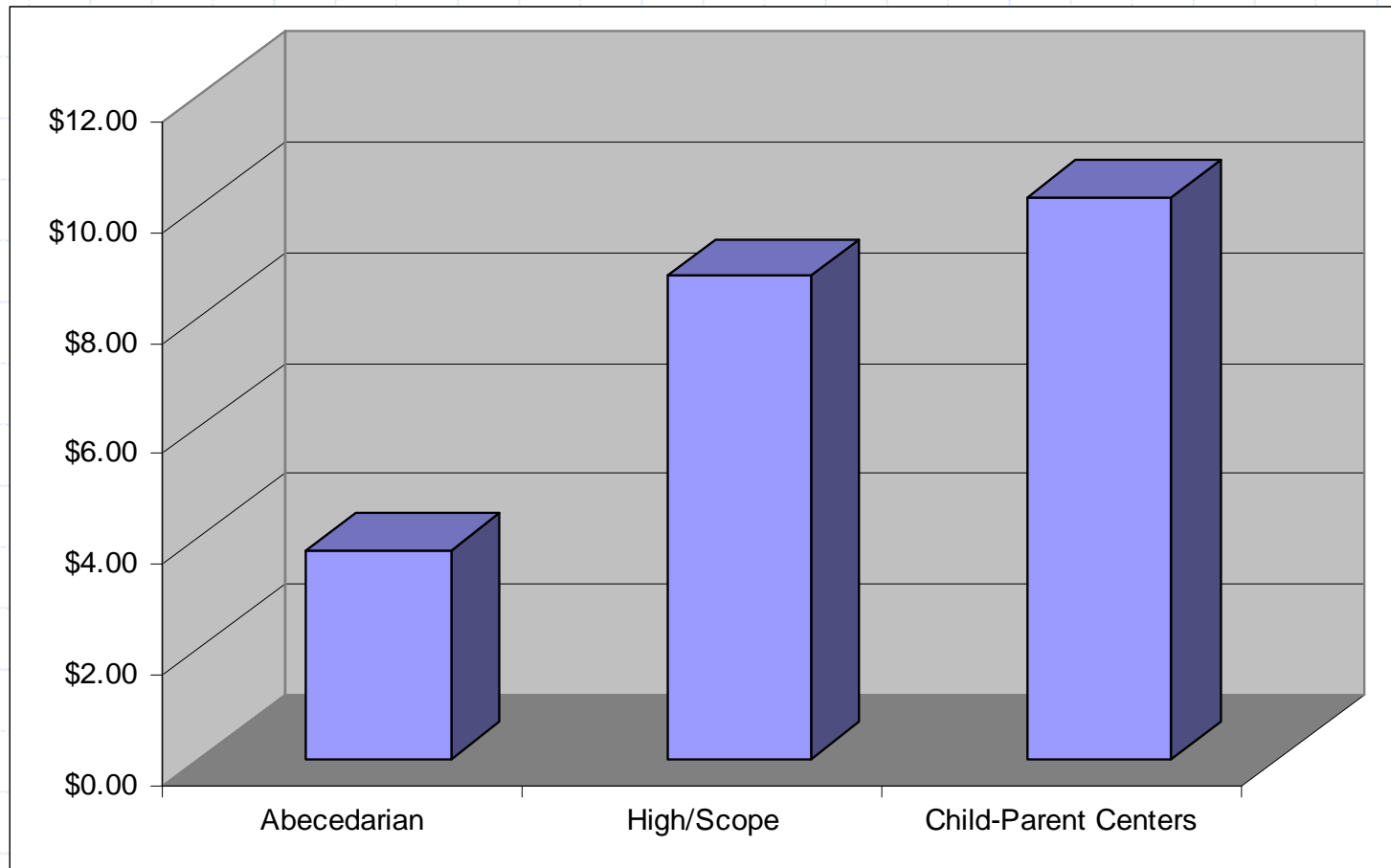


- ◆ **High/Scope Perry Preschool**
- ◆ **Carolina Abecedarian Project**
- ◆ **Chicago Child-Parent Centers**

Common traits: All had low child/staff ratios; trained teachers (BA degree); and rigorous evaluation.

Pre-K Benefits: Gains per \$1 invested

Source: CED, 2006

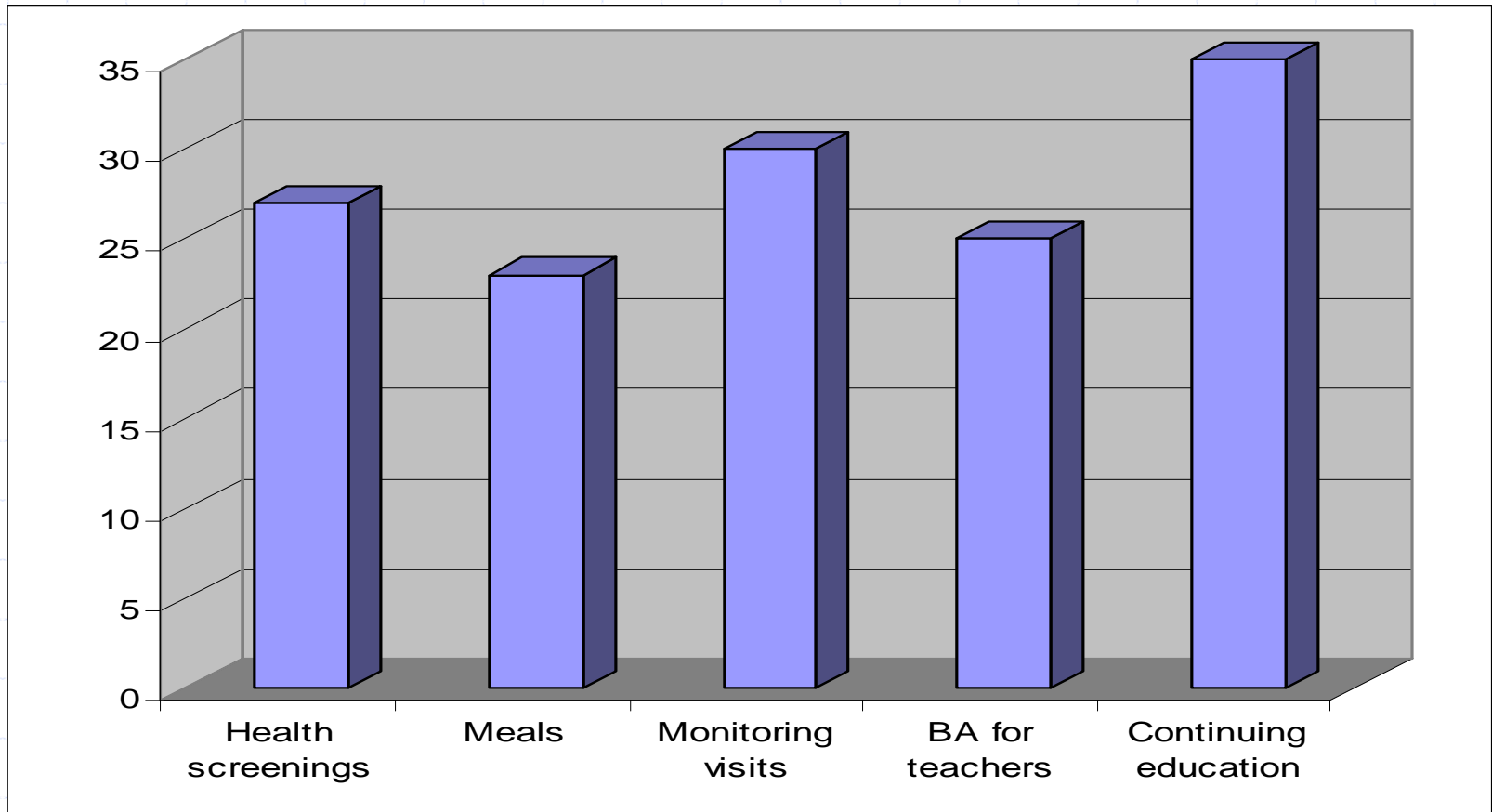


What Do State Pre-K Programs Look Like?

- ◆ 40 states have programs (2005)
- ◆ Half-day programs are most popular, but many localities get choice
- ◆ 27 states have learning standards
- ◆ Most target at-risk children
- ◆ More interest in universal pre-k (Georgia, Oklahoma set standard)

Key Characteristics of State Pre-K Programs

Number of states with these services/requirements



What Does the Data Show?

- ◆ Pre-k students scored higher on math and reading than children under parental care (Early Childhood Longitudinal Study).
- ◆ Five-state study (Michigan, New Jersey, Oklahoma, South Carolina, W. Virginia) show solid gains in math and language skills – up to 85 percent higher for pre-k “graduates” compared with other children.

Key Characteristics: Five States

Source: NIEER

State	Length of Day	Child/Staff Ratio	Maximum Class Size
Michigan	Half	8:1	18
New Jersey (Abbott)	Full	15:2	15
Oklahoma	Varies	10:1	20
South Carolina	Half	10:1	20
W. Virginia	Varies	10:1	20

State Evaluations

- ◆ **Attendance:** New York and Texas found gains for pre-k students beyond 5th grade.
- ◆ **Standardized tests:** Pre-k participants scored higher than others in Texas (3rd grade), New York (6th grade) and Maryland (multiple grades).
- ◆ **Retention:** Fewer pre-k “graduates” had to repeat a grade in Maryland, Michigan and Florida.

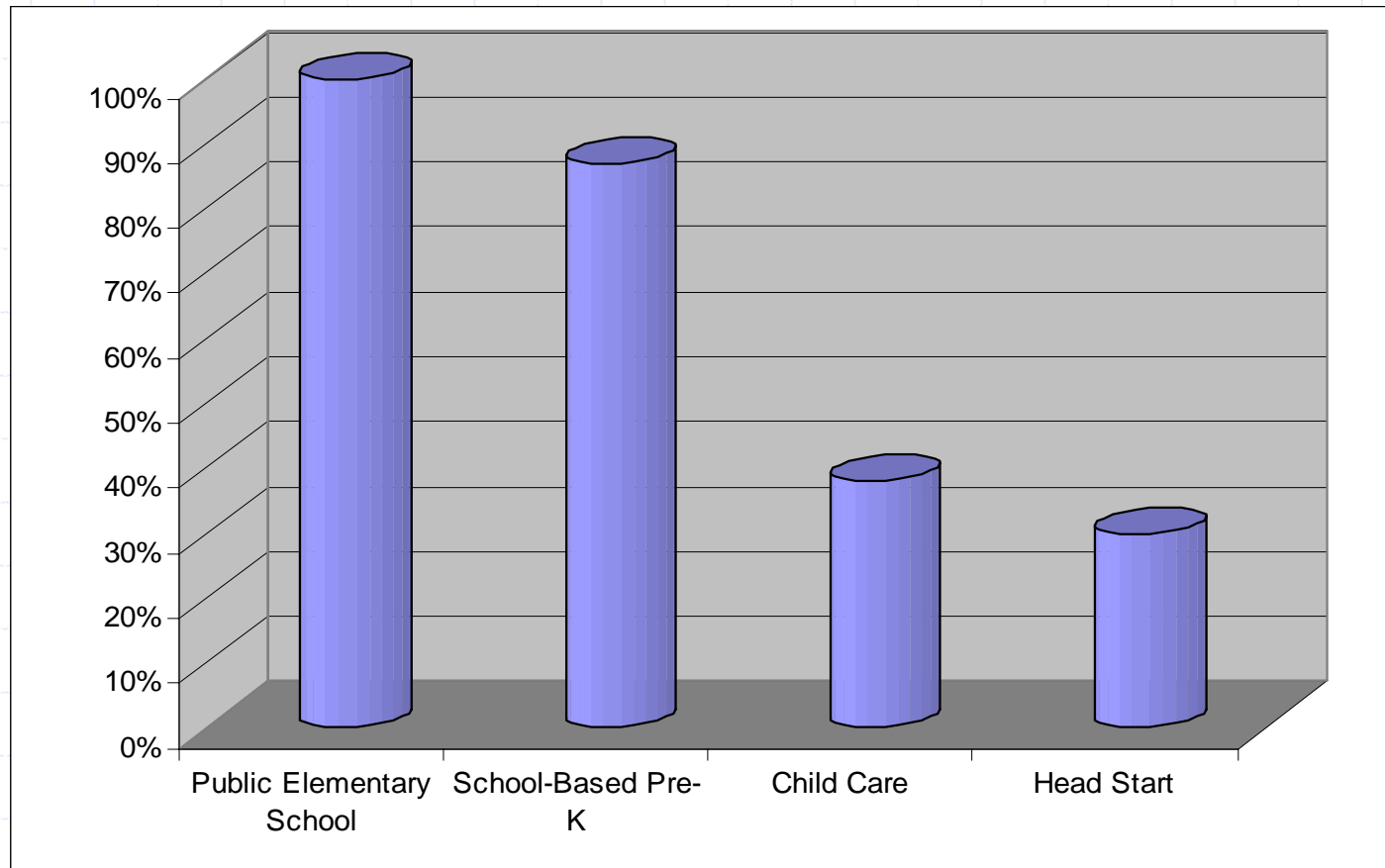
The Downside?

- ◆ Few states have had comprehensive evaluations (18 as of 2003)
- ◆ Possible fadeout over time
- ◆ Criticism from school choice proponents
 - do the test scores measure up?

Teacher Qualifications: A Key Issue

Percent of Teachers with BA Degrees

Barnett, NIEER, 2004

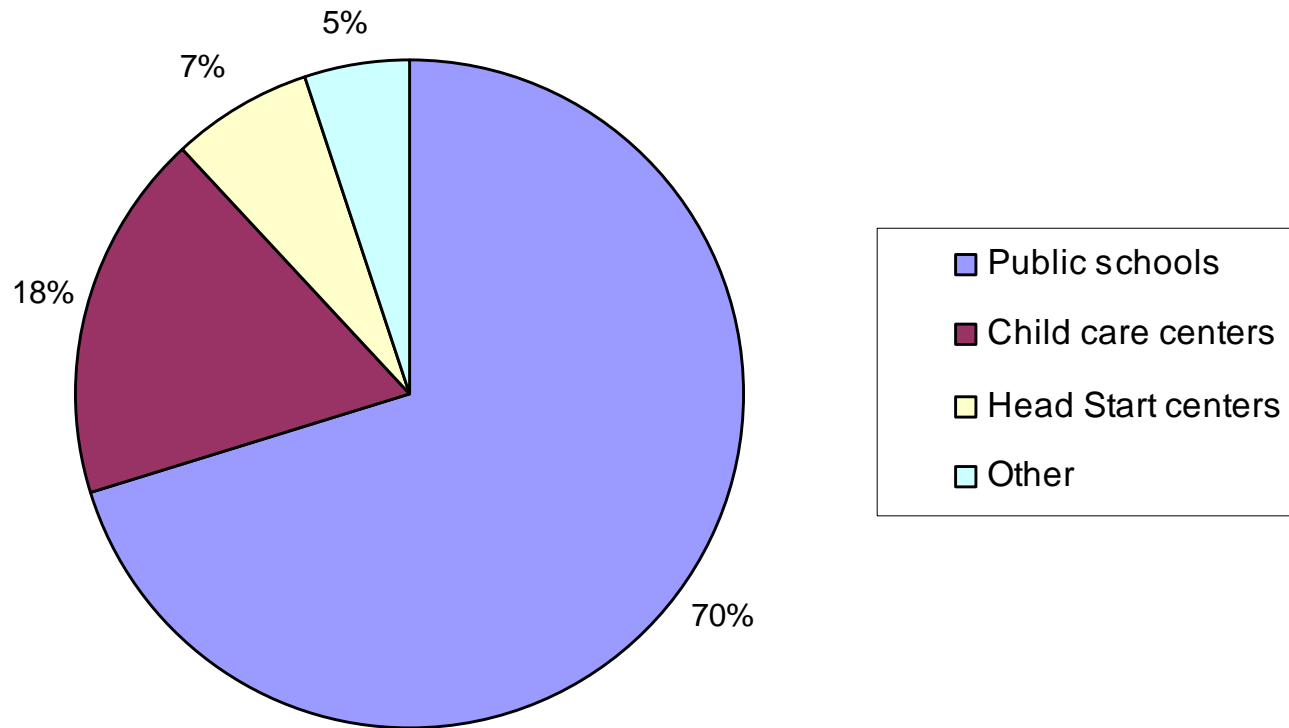


Mixed service delivery

- ◆ In many states, community-based programs (Head Start, child care) are eligible for pre-k grants.
- ◆ In five states, nearly half of all children received service in private child care settings.
- ◆ Challenges: Compensation, quality, teacher training

Location of Pre-K Programs

NIEER, 2004



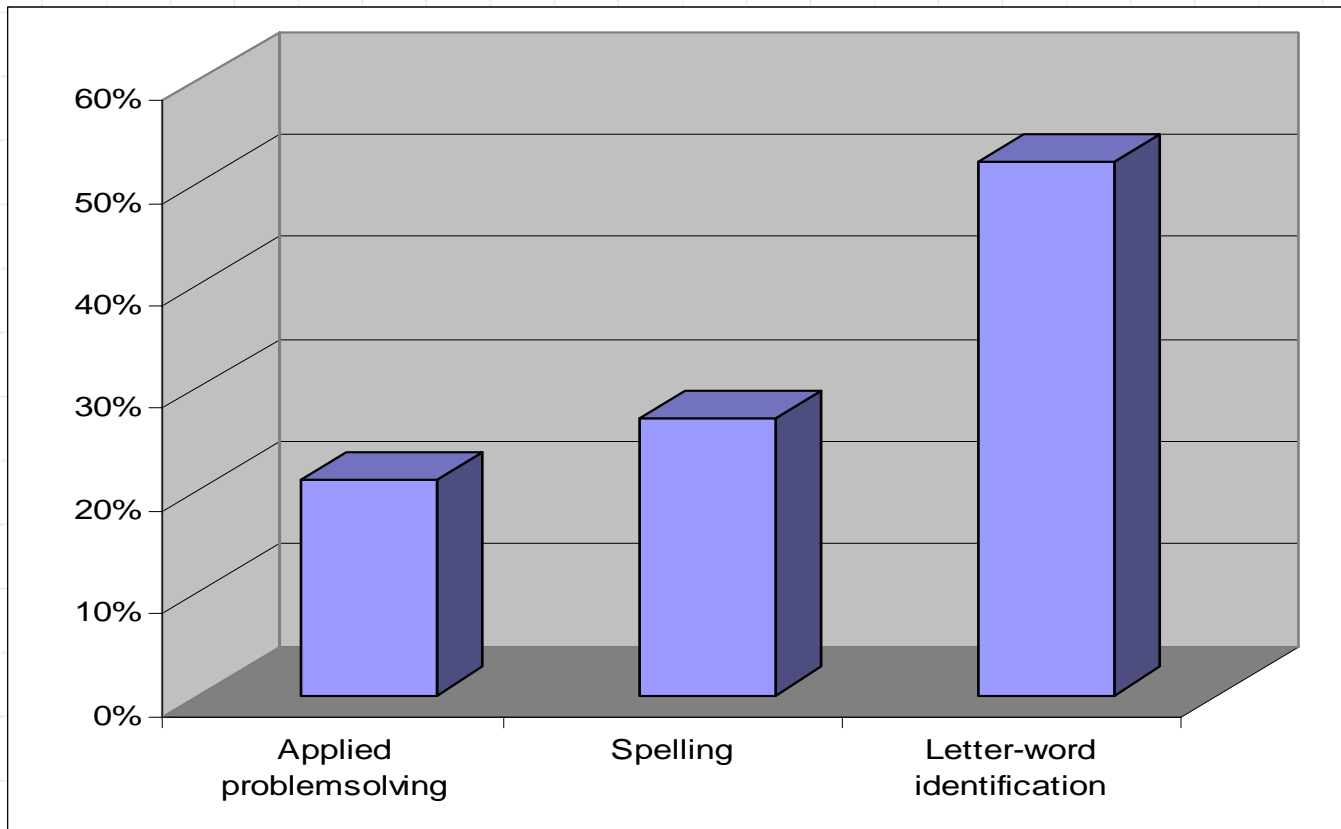
Best Practices: Oklahoma

- ◆ Voluntary universal program
- ◆ Operates entirely at public schools
- ◆ All teachers must have BA and early childhood certification
- ◆ Head Start and child care can collaborate to offer parents full-day coverage
- ◆ Funded by general education revenues

Oklahoma:

Rigorous Evaluation

Additional gains for pre-k children compared to non-participants

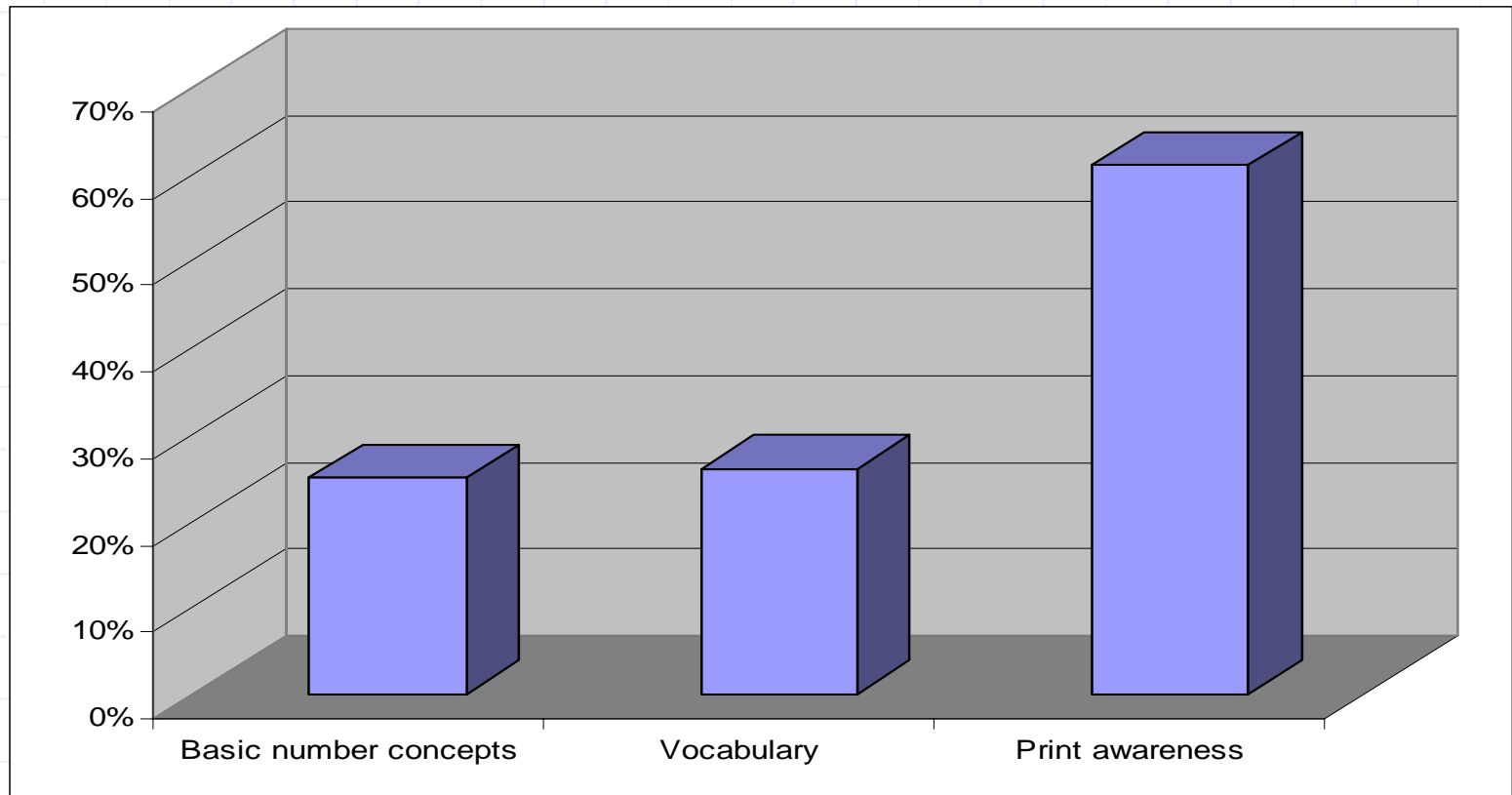


Best Practices: New Jersey

- ◆ State Supreme Court created program in high-poverty districts
- ◆ Pre-k program open 6 hours/day with additional child care available
- ◆ Virtually all teachers have bachelor's degrees
- ◆ Utilizes schools and community agencies
- ◆ Scholarship help available for teachers to earn BA

Results: New Jersey

Additional gains for pre-k children compared to non-participants



Best Practices: Michigan

- ◆ Began as pilot program in 1985
- ◆ Enrolls nearly 25,000 children – at least half must be low income; non-poor must have other risk factors
- ◆ Most funding goes to schools, which can subcontract with others
- ◆ Must operate at least part day
- ◆ Maximum class size: 18

Results: Michigan

- ◆ Higher pass rates for pre-k “graduates” on 4th grade math and reading tests.
- ◆ Lower retention rates through 2nd grade
 - 8% with pre-k program
 - 16% without pre-k program
- ◆ Higher levels of involvement by parents of former pre-k students

Lessons Learned

- ◆ Qualified teachers are essential.
- ◆ Quality pre-k programs can save money due to fewer special education placements and retentions in grade.
- ◆ Quality programs have low child/staff ratios and class sizes.
- ◆ Model programs (High/Scope) can inform states seeking quality programs.
- ◆ Up for debate: Targeted v. universal programs