

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Children Are Better Prepared for School Thanks to California Head Start Programs**

Sacramento, CA ( January 20, 2010) – Children who participate in Head Start programs are better prepared to start school, according to a new study conducted by Child Care Results on behalf of the California Head Start Association.

The data indicate a significant improvement for Head Start participants across various developmental areas, including language and literacy, math, motor skills, self regulation and several other domains. Head Start is the federally funded preschool program for young children and their parents.

Child assessment data have been collected for years by individual Head Start programs using a tool developed by the California Department of Education. For the first time ever, many California Head Start programs combined their information to allow for the broad analysis of program effect.

The study includes 6,600 children from fifteen Head Start programs across California and was analyzed by Child Care Results, a California-based firm specializing in data analysis for early childhood development programs. “While academic studies predict these sorts of outcomes for quality child development programs,” said Peter Huffaker, a lead researcher on the project, “it is significant to have operational data confirm the impact of Head Start programs locally.”

The analysis compared preschool children of the same age who had participated in Head Start for varying lengths of time. The results documented that children who had participated in the program for longer periods of time had higher levels of development in all areas.

“While academic research focusing on individual programs has shown the impact of quality preschool programs, this analysis is exciting because it demonstrates that you can scale a program as widely as Head Start and have a significant, ongoing, measurable impact in children’s lives,” according to California Secretary of Education Glen Thomas. “High-quality early childhood education is such a critical building block in a student’s social and educational foundation.”

Rebecca London, Senior Researcher at Stanford’s John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities, commented “The Child Care Results analysis is more sophisticated than what has been done previously with child care administrative data, and is an innovative way to think about analyzing program effects. It has the potential to offer policy makers useful and timely information about Head Start programs.”

The Outcome Bulletin summary is available at [www.caheadstart.org/ChildOutcomes2010](http://www.caheadstart.org/ChildOutcomes2010) and the study’s methodology at [www.childcareresults.com/ChildOutcomes2010](http://www.childcareresults.com/ChildOutcomes2010).

CONTACT:

April Morris

Child Care Results

[april@childcareresults.com](mailto:april@childcareresults.com)

800-493-8624 ext. 22

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