

# State-Funded, Full-Day 4K CERDEP Annual Report Summary

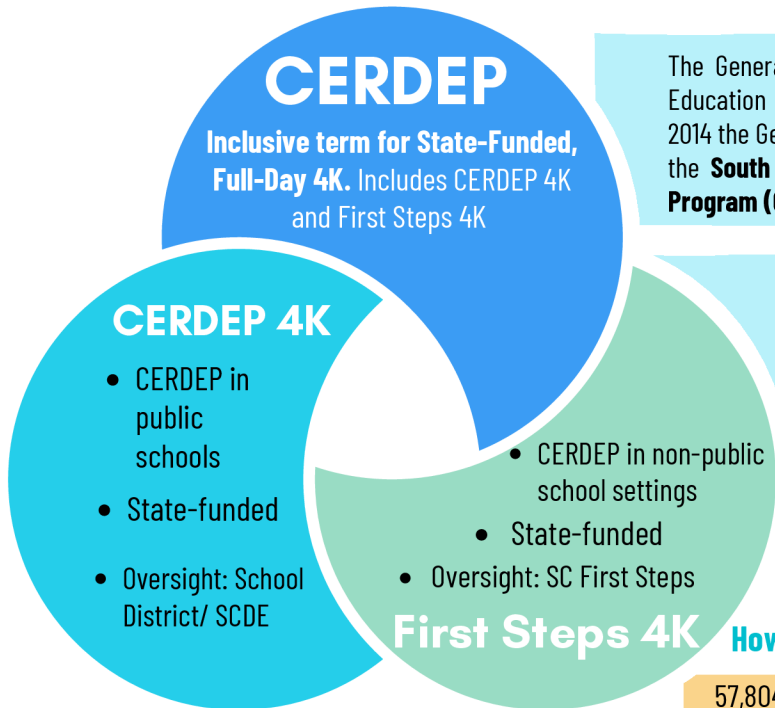


The Education Oversight Committee (EOC) annually evaluates CERDEP in accordance with Provisos 1.48 and 1A.26 of the 2023-24 General Appropriations Act.

## What is CERDEP?

The General Assembly first created and funded the Child Development Education Pilot Program by a budget proviso in Fiscal Year 2006-07. In 2014 the General Assembly codified the program in Act 284 and renamed it the **South Carolina Child Early Reading Development and Education Program (CERDEP)**

CERDEP is administered by the SC Department of Education (SCDE) and the Office of First Steps (SCFS) funded by the state of South Carolina. *It includes public schools, non-profit independent schools and childcare centers who adhere to program and quality requirements for CERDEP funding and serve eligible four-year-olds.*



## CERDEP Key Findings

### How many four-year-old children in SC are in poverty?

57,804 Kindergarten students enrolled at the start of the 2023-24 school year. Of these students, **34,878** (60%) were considered Pupils in Poverty.



### What impact does CERDEP investment have on kindergarten readiness for participants?



Pupils in poverty who participate in full-day, state-funded 4K via CERDEP programming are **more likely to Demonstrate Readiness** (37%) on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) than pupils in poverty who did not participate in CERDEP (27%).

### Does CERDEP benefit students with disabilities?



Students with disabilities who participated in CERDEP scored Demonstrating Readiness at higher percentages (19%) that the average of students with disabilities (17%) demonstrating readiness.

### How many children are served by CERDEP? How many potentially eligible children are not served by CERDEP?



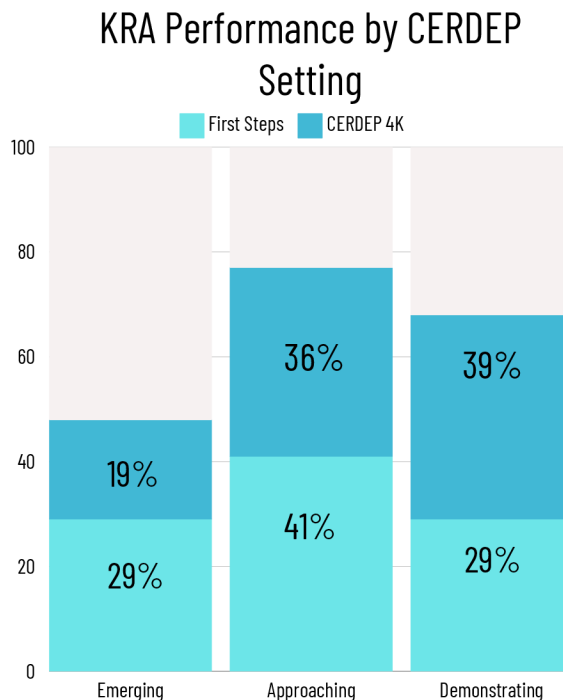
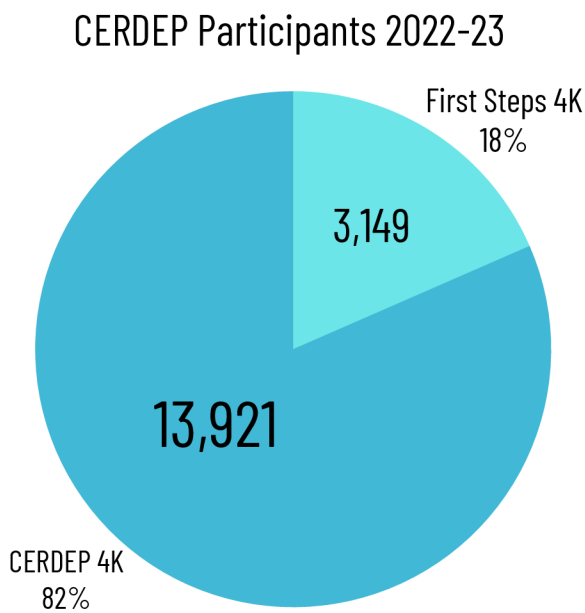
In the 2022-23 school year, **17,070** children participated in CERDEP (85% of these participants were pupils in poverty). In the same school year, **21,385** potentially eligible students did not participate in CERDEP.



### What is the financial investment in CERDEP?

**\$106,698,962** was spent on 4K for the 20022-23 Fiscal Year, which is the largest investment to date.

# CERDEP Participants and KRA Performance



## EOC Recommendations

### Expand Opportunities for CERDEP Access and Participation:

According to Rutgers University's National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) in May 2023, South Carolina ranked 11th nationally in access to 4K. While this national comparison is relatively high, there are still **more than 11,000 students in poverty unserved by CERDEP** or any other 4K program at low or no cost to parents. Expanding access to CERDEP is recommended using the following steps:

#### Fund Additional CERDEP 4K Programs

South Carolina ranks 37th in state spending and 40th overall in all total PreK spending (state, federal, and local sources). Investing in additional classrooms will increase access and investment, and improve our national ranking.

#### Incentivize CERDEP Participation for Private Childcare Providers

There are approximately 11,000 children who could access free full-day 4K and would benefit from increased opportunities. To facilitate provider recruitment efforts, it is recommended that a supplemental study be completed to identify potential incentives that would entice additional private providers to participate in First Steps 4K programming.

#### Use Waitlists Differently to Increase Enrollment Efficiency

EOC staff is conducting research to gain better understanding of the policies, procedures, and processes at the state, district, and school level for placing children on waitlists for pre-K programs. It is recommended that findings from this research be used for the EOC to convene all stakeholders to best determine the needed supports so that all eligible children can find 4K opportunities more efficiently.

Scan to access full report

