

## Evaluating the Effectiveness of Tennessee's Voluntary Pre-K Program

### PRI & TN DOE Division of School Readiness and Early Learning

#### *RCT TIMELINE*

##### *Research Questions*

1. Does participation in the TN-VPK program improve subsequent academic performance?
2. What are the characteristics of the children who benefit the most from TN-VPK in terms of subsequent academic performance?

Requires following children who have and who have not participated in TN Pre-K from the preschool year through at least 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The groups of children must be large enough and representative enough of the state to yield reliable information.

**Research design:** Randomized assignment of children to Pre-K classrooms in schools that have more children who want Pre-K than can be served. Children will be assessed on reading and math achievement at the beginning of Pre-K and every year through the TCAP test scores in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Both children who were in Pre-K and those who did not get in will be followed and assessed.

#### **Group 1**

- Randomization of Applicant Lists 2009 -2010
- Children selected to attend Pre-K compared to those not selected to attend Pre-K
- Assessed in Fall 2009 and in Spring 2010 in Pre-K classrooms across TN
- Assessed in Spring 2011, Spring 2012 and Spring 2013 in elementary schools across TN

#### **Group 2**

- **Randomization of Applicant Lists 2010 -2011** Children selected to attend Pre-K compared to those not selected to attend Pre-K
- Assessed in Fall 2010 and in Spring 2011 in Pre-K classrooms across TN
- Assessed in Spring 2012, and Spring 2013 in elementary schools across TN

#### **Continuing Timeline:**

- All consenting and participating students in groups 1 and 2 will be tracked each year. Principals across TN are asked to help us locate and confirm enrollment of these students.
- Each winter classroom teachers will be asked to complete a Child Report form for each participating child in the classroom. They will receive \$25 if they have a single participant and \$10 for each additional participant.
- In the spring of each year, participating students will be assessed through Spring 2014.
- Participants have documented parent consents on file. We will send Update and Reminders to parents each year as we locate participants in their new classroom. Parents are reminded of their participation and are requested to contact us, if they no longer want to participate.

**As we track these children, school districts and elementary schools in every district across TN are asked to help us locate, verify school, and provide us with the current classroom. We ask for full support from district and school administrators – continuing through Spring of 2014.**