Compared to children participating in a half-day Head Start program, Head Start children with dual enrollment in Statewide Voluntary Preschool Programs have:

- 49% higher literacy scores
- 7% higher physical assessment scores
- 16% higher cognitive assessment scores
- 12% higher language scores
- 39% higher math scores

*Results account for family demographics, birth risks, and fall assessment scores.

However, only 52% of Iowa’s Head Start children are enrolled in both programs. Head Start families with lower income and Black or multiracial families were less likely to attend both.
Despite the demonstrated academic and socio-emotional benefits of full-day experiences, currently neither Head Start nor Iowa’s Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program offer full-day programming.

This means some children are more or less likely to connect to both programs on their own.

Children enrolled in school districts that report strong partnerships with their local Head Start programs are more likely to enroll in both experiences. These partnerships help facilitate dual enrollment, have stronger communications among programs, and are more likely to share professional development opportunities with educators.

**Main Takeaways**

- Families in Iowa need full-day childcare. The child care shortage is severely affecting families. (see previous I2D2 briefs on the [Iowa Child Care Shortage](#) and [Preschool Access: Fill in the Gaps](#))

- There may be gaps in equitable access of full-day preschool options for lower income, Black, and multiracial families.

- In a state like Iowa where Head Start and Statewide Voluntary Preschool are offered as half-day programs, strong partnerships among these programs appear to be a solid step forward to strengthening children’s’ early learning experiences.

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