

This “spotlight” on the CEELO Cost of Preschool Quality appeared in the [US Department of Education’s Technical Assistance Team News Bulletin](#) (June 2017).

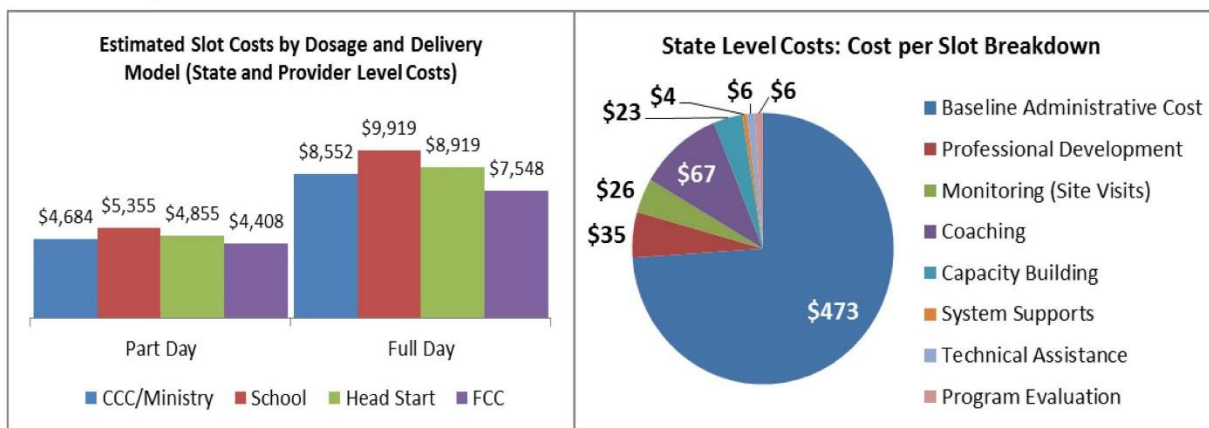
## Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes: Cost of Preschool Quality

CEELO developed the [Cost of Preschool Quality \(CPQ\)](#), an Excel-based tool to estimate the cost of expanding high-quality preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds. The model includes settings for “best practice” based on the 10 National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) [quality standards benchmarks](#) (2016) and allows for changes on these setting so states can understand cost implications for various alternate modes of delivery.

CEELO met with early childhood administrators from the Indiana Departments of Education (INDOE) and Family and Social Services Administration (INFSSA) to determine the goals, timeline and expected results of their technical assistance request to build capacity for using the CPQ to inform state policy decisions.



### Types of Data Produced by CPQ



Over nine months, CEELO staff worked with the state team both in-person and by phone to guide data collection, develop cost projections, and vet initial projections with IN DOE and FFSA, and other ELAC staff. CEELO helped the state team prepare presentations and reports for the ELAC. To conclude the TA request, CEELO provided a three-hour training on the CPQ to an expanded group of state staff.

With help from CEELO, the Indiana state team determined various costs for offering high-quality preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds in mixed delivery settings and different locations across the state.

CEELO built the capacity of the state workgroup to prepare comprehensive data and graphics for presentations and reports to the [Governor and legislators from ELAC](#), the state Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the [Indiana Senate Education Committee](#). The information was so valuable, CEELO was asked to teach state agency staff to use the CPQ tool to drive decisions and inform policy. Indiana staff also shared lessons learned about using the CPQ with other states during a [national webinar](#). Today, as Indiana considers next steps, stakeholders continue working with CEELO to explore scenarios for expanding quality preschool across the state.

“It helped us think more about which quality factors are also cost-drivers,” said Amanda Zimmerman of Early Learning Indiana. “This tool helped us understand what data we had that felt reliable and what areas we need to think further on or model differently in the future to get more precise estimates.”

## Lessons CEELO learned:

Our work with states revealed a need for responses to policy maker questions about the costs of various pre-K proposals that went beyond “best guess.” We quickly realized they needed a way to calculate expenses that could accommodate multiple variables, such as class size, program duration and dose, teacher professional development, administrative support and quality assessments. Originally, CEELO planned to develop this calculator tool, share it with TA clients, provide initial training on its use and then offer occasional support as needed. CEELO now understands this is an interactive, cyclical process.

## Next Steps:

As the U.S. Department of Education encourages states to take the lead in education policy, the need for evidence-based cost data has become even more important to sustaining good programs and increasing access. In addition to helping states better estimate costs of providing high-quality pre-K, CEELO is developing new TA focused on helping states better understand the financing side and various sources of funding.

CEELO is evaluating CPQ with help from our users and working with our developer to make the calculator even more responsive. We will launch CPQ 2.0 in coming months, along with an online CPQ Communications Toolkit including tips for making the most of CPQ data, talking points addressing FAQ, and sample outreach materials. We also are working with the developer to reformat the online CPQ User Manual and Glossary/Codebook to be more interactive.

In addition, CEELO will be updating CPQ to align with new NIEER quality standards benchmarks identified in The State of Preschool 2016. New benchmarks focus on policies that can foster high-quality classroom experiences, such as professional development and coaching for all teaching staff and continuous improvement quality systems through which teachers receive constructive feedback on their teaching practices.

