Jumpstart is a national early language and literacy organization that is working toward the day every child in America enters school prepared to succeed. The work at the core of this vision is done by caring adults, called Corps members, from our higher education partner sites and the community. Corps members provide language and literacy support to young children (those who are 36 to 59 months of age at the start of each school year) in early childhood centers throughout the country. By engaging in this partnership, Jumpstart exists in 250 early childhood centers, 62 higher education partners, and 3,500 caring adults ensuring school success for 13,000 preschool children in 60 communities nationwide. Through Jumpstart’s partnership with Georgia State University, Jumpstart pairs highly-trained, Georgia State University students with children in early childhood centers throughout the Metro Atlanta area to deliver an innovative early language and literacy curriculum. All of the college students come from various programs of study, but possess a common interest in civic and urban education, social policy and making a difference in urban communities. Within the Georgia State University community, Jumpstart serves 4 early childhood learning centers, 200 preschool children, 50 corps members, and 117 volunteers.

About the Project

- **THE ISSUE:**
  Many children entering kindergarten have not been exposed to standard vernacular English literacy and language concepts.

- **BACKGROUND:**
  Jumpstart is an AmeriCorps program, funded through the Corporation for National and Community Service. GSU started its jumpstart chapter in 2004.

- **THE PURPOSE**
  To provide additional literacy and language curricula to struggling children for successful academic careers.

- **ACTIVITIES**
  Student corps engage children in activities such as one-on-one reading, literacy, language, singing, games, etc.
During the 2010–2011 program year, 160 pre-kindergarten children and their families were served in the following child development centers: Elizabeth Burch Early Learning Center, Fairytales Early Learning Center, Renaissance Early Learning Center, and Sheltering Arms at Dunbar Elementary. These schools are respectively located in the historic urban communities of Peoplestown/Summerhill, Bankhead, Old Fourth Ward District, and Mechanicsville. Approximately fifty-seven undergraduate and graduate students of Georgia State University participated in Jumpstart as AmeriCorps corps members.

Through the service of the students and staff at Georgia State University, Jumpstart at Georgia State University completes approximately 15,000 hours in service annually! Each corps member commits to 300 hours of service during the school year. This commitment includes: teaching Jumpstart sessions for four hours a week, assisting the classroom teacher between six to ten hours a week, and session preparation and team meetings for two to three hours a week. Additionally, the Corps completed a series of service events, such as Jumpstart’s annual Read for the Record National Event, and many other citizenship service events.

Jumpstart at Georgia State University has made significant gains in the communities served by the organization. Results from Jumpstart’s annual pre- and post-assessment tool shows that Jumpstart participants typically begin the year with skills rated lower than their peers, but make statistically significant gains by the end of the year that are greater than their classmates who do not participate in Jumpstart. In addition to the children’s educative benefits, the Corps members gained significant experience in the field of education, a new found appreciation for the importance of early childhood education programs, and a heightened sense of issues surrounding education and urban communities.