

Research Shows: The Benefits of High-Quality Preschool



From economics to neuroscience, education to public policy, a vast body of research demonstrates that early education matters. Early childhood provides a window of opportunity to dramatically shape a child's brain when it is extremely receptive and malleable. Rich early experiences lay the foundation for future learning.

By the time they enter kindergarten, children who attend preschool are already ahead in early reading and math skills. That educational boost continues through K-12 and into adulthood, researchers who have followed children for decades found. Economic analyses show high-quality preschool saves our schools and our state money, and provides long-term benefits to our children and communities.

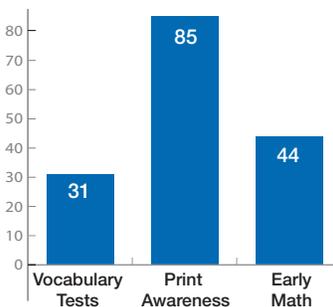
Ready for Kindergarten

Five-State Study

- Researchers examined how five high-quality, state-funded preschools affected the early academic skills of children entering kindergarten in Michigan, New Jersey, Oklahoma, South Carolina and West Virginia.
- Children who attended public preschool outscored those who did not by:
 - 31% on vocabulary tests;
 - 85% in print awareness skills such as letters and sounds; and
 - 44% in early math skills.

Five-State Study: Preschoolers More Ready for Kindergarten

Children who attended public preschool outscored those who did not by:



Source: NIEER Multi-State Study Finds Meaningful Gains from Pre-K (2006)

Eager Young Learners

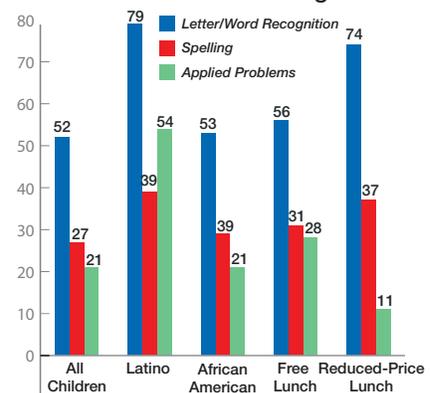
- From the time they are born to the first day of kindergarten, children develop more rapidly than at any other time in life.
- During these years, when children's brains are very receptive and malleable, early experiences shape the architecture of developing brain circuits.
- In early childhood, children develop the linguistic, cognitive, social and emotional capabilities that serve as building blocks for later development.



Oklahoma

- Oklahoma's high-quality, state-funded preschool program produced significant cognitive gains beyond those that would naturally occur in one year.
- Children who attended the preschool program showed gains in early reading and math skills of:
 - 52% in letter and word identification;
 - 27% in spelling; and
 - 21% in applied problems.
- Low-income, Latino and African American children showed the greatest gains.

Gains by Children in Oklahoma's Pre-K Program

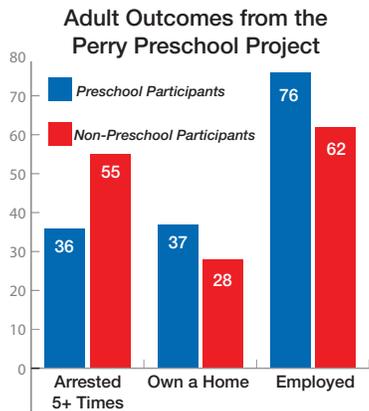
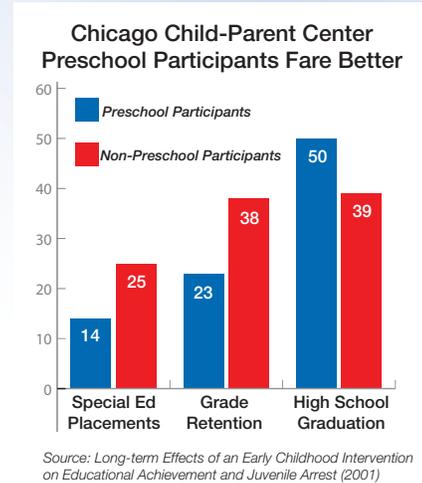


Source: The Effects of Oklahoma's Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program on School Readiness (2004)

Thriving Students

Chicago Child-Parent Centers

- Children who attended high-quality preschool did significantly better in K-12 than children who did not, according to a longitudinal study of nearly 1,000 low-income African American children in Chicago Public School's large-scale preschool program.
- Preschool participants:
 - scored better on reading and math achievement tests through ninth grade;
 - were less likely to be placed in special education;
 - were less likely to be held back a grade; and
 - were more likely to graduate high school.



Source: High/Scope Perry Preschool Project Through Age 40 (2004)

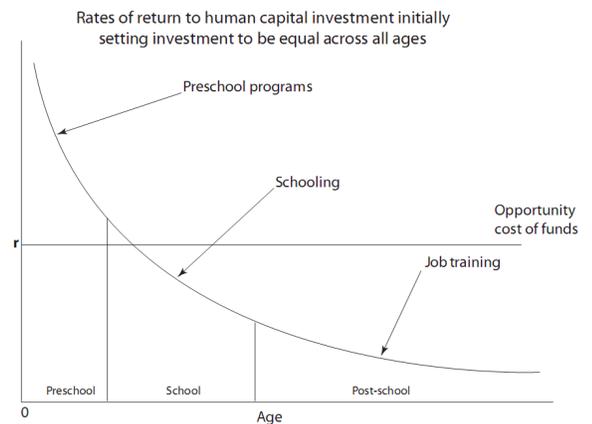
Successful Adults

Perry Preschool Project

- The benefits of high-quality preschool continue into adulthood, according to the High/Scope Perry Preschool Study, which has followed participants in a high-quality program for more than 40 years.
- Compared to a control group who did not attend preschool, Perry participants were:
 - less likely to be arrested more than five times;
 - more likely to own a home; and
 - more likely to be employed.

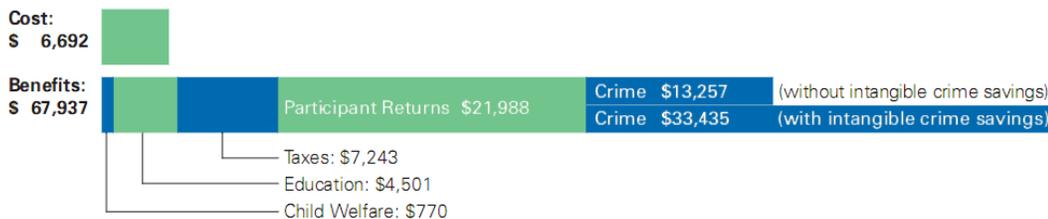
An Investment That Pays Off

- Early interventions for disadvantaged children are more economically efficient and produce higher returns than remedial programs to help teenagers and young adults catch up later on, according to James Heckman, Nobel Laureate in Economics.
- Cost-benefit analyses of high-quality preschool show it generates \$7 to \$17 for every dollar spent, yielding significant dividends in the form of government savings on welfare, education and criminal justice and increased earnings for participants. The Chicago Child-Parent Centers generated \$7 in benefits for every dollar invested. The Perry Preschool Project shows a larger return on investment - \$17 per dollar spent - because researchers tracked participants for a longer period of time, allowing more benefits to accrue.



Source: Heckman, J. Investing in Disadvantaged Young Children in an Economically Efficient Policy (2006)

Chicago Child-Parent Center Cost vs. Benefit



Source: Age 21 Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Title I Chicago Child-Parent Centers (2002)

Sources for all research cited in this document are available at www.preschoolcalifornia.org

For more information, visit www.preschoolcalifornia.org



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