



**CHILDREN'S  
ACTION  
ALLIANCE**

4001 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Suite 160  
Phoenix, Arizona 85012  
(602) 266-0707  
Fax: (602) 263-8792  
<http://www.azchildren.org>

**Quality Preschool Leads to School Success  
June 2005**

***Benefits from quality preschool programs are long-lasting.***

- A 37 year longitudinal study of participants in the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project found that kids who participated in the program had significantly better outcomes as adults at age 40 than children who did not attend the preschool. Participants were more likely to complete high school, have higher monthly earnings, and own their own homes. They were less likely to need special education, receive welfare or be arrested.<sup>1</sup>
- A study of the Abecedarian early childhood pre-school program compared participants to a control group and found that students who attended the early care program were 74% less likely to become teen mothers and could earn \$3,750 more a year than those who had not been in a pre-school program.<sup>2</sup>
- A 15-year longitudinal study of low-income children in Chicago who participated in a school district preschool program found a 33% reduction in the rate of juvenile arrests, a 40% reduction in grade retention, a 41% reduction in the need for special education, and a 29% increase in the rate of high-school completion.<sup>3</sup>
- A review of a number of pre-school programs found that the programs provided varying improvements in a number of different areas. These included gains in cognitive development, improvements in educational outcomes, reduced levels of criminal activity and increased economic self-sufficiency, first for the parent and later for the child.<sup>4</sup>
- For non-disabled students in the Delaware programs, they were more than twice as likely to advance a grade level than their peers who weren't participating in the program. Preschool participants were also more likely to have satisfactory or outstanding grades in math or language arts by third grade<sup>5</sup>.
- Quality pre-kindergarten and childcare programs have produced dramatic, long-term impacts on the lives of children from disadvantaged families, including increasing high school graduation rates and decreasing crime<sup>6</sup>.
- A review of 36 studies of early childhood programs including preschool found "sizeable" long-term effects on school achievement, grade retention, placement in special education and social adjustment.<sup>7</sup>
- A study from Cornell University of preschool and Head Start programs concluded that children who participated in preschool were less likely to repeat a grade or be assigned to special education programs even 6 to 13 years later.<sup>8</sup>

- A study of Delaware's pre-kindergarten programs (including Head Start and the Early Childhood Assistance Program modeled after Head Start) found significant improvements in math and language for all children participating, with poor and disabled students making the most dramatic improvements<sup>9</sup>.

***Quality preschool is a sound investment.***

- A 37 year study of the very high quality Perry Preschool program found that by the time participants were age 40, the program showed a return to society of more than \$17 for every \$1 invested.<sup>10</sup> Three other preschool programs examined provided returns of \$4 to \$5 dollars on each dollar.<sup>11</sup>
- A 2004 study from the Economic Policy Institute finds that taxpayers will recoup more than \$2.50 for every \$1 invested in quality care and education, in addition to the benefits for families involved. If the nation provided quality early education for all poor 3 and 4 year olds starting in 2005, by 2050 the nation would have an additional \$61 billion in revenues.<sup>12</sup>

***Kids who participate in quality preschool programs are more likely to start school ready to learn.***

- Four year olds participating in Head Start could recognize and understand more words and used a broader vocabulary than children with no preschool. This rigorous study compared 80 children in Head Start with 80 peers who had no preschool at all.<sup>13</sup>
- Research has repeatedly demonstrated high quality early childhood programs, including preschool, enhance the social, cognitive, and language development of children. Children in quality preschool are more likely to be emotionally secure and self-confident, proficient in language use, able to regulate aggressive inclination, and generally do better in school.<sup>14</sup>
- A study of Washington's Early Assistance Program, a state pre-kindergarten program, revealed that children who participated had more enthusiasm about school, behaved better, suffered fewer health problems and had greater academic progress than children who were eligible but did not participate.<sup>15</sup>
- Children in higher per-student spending Head Start programs have significantly larger gains on reading scores and a lower probability of grade retention than do Head Start children in lower spending programs.<sup>16</sup>

***Quality preschool is making a difference for Arizona children***

- The Alhambra school district in Phoenix compared test scores for all students in third and fifth grade to the test scores for third and fifth grade students who attended preschool. Students who attended preschool had consistently higher test scores. Specifically, for third graders who completed the SAT9 test (an achievement test), those who attended preschool scored 13 percentile points higher in reading than all third graders in the district. SAT9 results for preschool participants in the fifth grade were 10 percentile points higher than for all district fifth graders.<sup>17</sup>
- 55% of fifth grade students who attended preschool met or exceeded math standards on the AIMS test, compared to 39% of all fifth graders for the district.<sup>18</sup>

***Quality preschool programs in public schools can be especially beneficial for children.***

- Research from Johns Hopkins University concluded that preschool in a school-based setting can help ease a child's transition into first grade. This link between preschool and first grade can set up a path that results in more sustained, positive long-term effects of preschool.<sup>19</sup>

- A study from Wellesley College Center for Research on Women found “There is promise in the entrance of schools into the early childhood arena. In many communities they have the best facilities available and we have found that when public school programs reflect adequate support, financing and knowledge of good practice in early childhood development, they are excellent providers.”<sup>20</sup>

### ***What is quality preschool?***

- The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has accreditation standards for preschool programs that fall into ten major categories. Standards that must be met include various staff qualifications and staff/child ratios (such as 1 instructor to every six children for 2-year olds), developmentally appropriate materials and equipment, and a written statement of the program’s philosophy and goals.<sup>21</sup>

## **SOURCES**

<sup>1</sup> Lawrence J. Schweinhart et. al., *Lifetime Effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40*; High/Scope Press; Ypsilanti Michigan, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Masse, Leonard N. A Benefit Cost Analysis of the Abecedarian Early Childhood Intervention.

<sup>3</sup> “Study: Early Intervention Cuts Crime, Dropout Rates,” May 8, 2001 news release from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Arthur Reynolds and Judy Temple. Study published in May 9, 2001 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

<sup>4</sup> Karoly, Lynn A., et. All. Investing in Our Children: What We Know and Don’t Know About the Costs and Benefits of Early Childhood Interventions. RAND, 1998.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Gamel-McCormick, Deborah Amsden, Investing in Better Outcomes: *The Delaware Early Childhood Longitudinal Study*, April 2002, University of Delaware.

<sup>6</sup> Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, “Head Start Improves Achievement & Reduces Crime”, <http://www.fightcrime.org/reports/php>

<sup>7</sup> W. Steven Barnett, “Long-Term Effects of Early Childhood Programs on Cognitive and School Outcomes,” *The Future of Children: Long-Term Outcomes of Early Childhood Programs*, vol 5, number 3, Winter 1995.

<sup>8</sup> Why Child Care Matters: Preparing Young Children for a More Productive America, Committee for Economic Development, New York, New York, 1993.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Gamel-McCormick, Deborah Amsden, Investing in Better Outcomes: *The Delaware Early Childhood Longitudinal Study*, April 2002, University of Delaware.

<sup>10</sup> Lawrence J. Schweinhart et. al., *Lifetime Effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40*; High/Scope Press; Ypsilanti Michigan, 2005.

<sup>11</sup> Early Learning Left Out: Public Spending on Children in Iowa: Report on State, Federal and School District Expenditures in 2001, Child and Family Policy Center.

<sup>12</sup> Robert G. Lynch, *Exceptional Returns: Economic, Fiscal and Social Benefits of Investment in Early Childhood Development*, Economic Policy Institute, Washington DC 2004.

<sup>13</sup> Martha Abbott-Shim, *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, Vol 8, No 2, pp 191-214, cited in National Institute for Early Education Research, Winter 2004.

<sup>14</sup> Suzanne W. Helburn, Carollee Howes, *Child Care Cost and Quality, The Future of Children, Financing Child Care*, vol 6, no2, Summer/Fall 1996.

<sup>15</sup> Karen Schulman, et. al., Seeds of Success: State Prekindergarten Initiatives 1998-1999, Children’s Defense Fund, September 1999.

<sup>16</sup> Currie, Janet and Matthew Neidell. 2003. “Getting Inside the Black Box of Head Start Quality: What Matters and What Doesn’t?” National Bureau of Economic Research, working paper 10091, November.

<sup>17</sup> Report from Dr. Jim Rice, Alhambra Superintendent, September 19, 2003.

<sup>18</sup> Report from Dr. Jim Rice, Alhambra Superintendent, September 19, 2003.

<sup>19</sup> Doris Entwisle, “The Role of Schools in Sustaining Early Childhood Program Benefits,” *The Future of Children: Long-Term Outcomes of Early Childhood Programs*, vol 5, number 3, Winter 1995.

<sup>20</sup> Anne Mitchell, Michelle Seligson, Fern Marx, *Early Childhood Programs and the Public Schools: Between Promise and Practice*, Dover, Massachusetts, 1989.

<sup>21</sup> NAEYC Accreditation: About Accreditation: 10 Components. [Http://www.naeyc.org/accreditation/naeyc\\_accred/info\\_general-components.asp](http://www.naeyc.org/accreditation/naeyc_accred/info_general-components.asp)