

Preschool Builds School Readiness

Preschool boosts school success

- Children who spend more months in preschool do better on achievement tests in the second grade, have fewer behavior problems in third grade, and are less likely to have to repeat a grade. (National Research Council)
- Children in low-income families who attend preschool do better academically and socially when they get to school and are less likely to repeat a grade or to need special education. (Future of Children)

Quality makes a difference

- Children from low-income families who had attended quality educational child care programs from birth to age five scored better on reading tests when they got to elementary and middle school. At age 21 they scored higher on IQ, reading, and math tests. They were also more likely to be enrolled in or to have graduated from a four-year college, to be working, and to have delayed parenthood. (Abecedarian Project)
- Children who attended higher-quality centers scored better on tests of learning and social skills from kindergarten through second grade. The quality of the preschool experience made more of a difference for children whose mothers had less education. (Cost, Quality, and Outcomes Study)
- When child care providers were given access to books and training on using books to boost learning, children in their care scored higher on a range of reading-readiness skills in kindergarten. (National Research Council)
- The Head Start programs that had the biggest positive effects on children's learning were the ones who had the highest-quality educational program and paid the most attention to involving parents.
- Infants and toddlers from low-income families who were in higher quality child care developed better intellectually, gained language skills faster, and scored higher on IQ tests than children in lower-quality programs. (U.S. Maternal and Child Health Bureau)

The High/Scope Educational Research Foundation compared three types of preschool programs:

1. a *high-quality, traditional play-based preschool*
2. *the High/Scope method*, a play-based program in which teachers made more systematic efforts to promote learning
3. a *"drills and skills" program* in which teachers used "direct instruction" to boost academic skills.



The direct-instruction program produced higher test scores in the short run. But during their school years, almost half of these students were identified as emotionally "impaired" and in need of special assistance. **By age 23, they had many more felony arrests, suspensions from work, and problems with their families.** Children from the other two groups had many fewer such problems.