



## **Early Childhood Education Fact Sheet**

### **What the Research Shows:**

#### **1. Early care helps children have greater school readiness.**

Numerous studies have shown that preschool programs prepare children for kindergarten and elementary school. A study by the University of North Carolina shows that children who enter kindergarten from quality pre-kindergarten exposure have better reading, language and social skills than those who lacked this preparation. This finding is echoed by a study of Georgia's lottery funded Pre-K program in which kindergarten teachers reported that students who attend Pre-K were better prepared in pre-reading, pre-math, motor development skills and interactions with other children and adults.

#### **2. Early care improves scores on primary grade testing.**

At least five studies have shown statistically significant positive effects of early childhood education on students' performance on standardized achievement tests. These include the North Carolina Abecedarian Project, where the differences in reading scores were large, with large to moderate differences in math scores, and the Ypsilanti/Perry Preschool Project.

#### **3. Early care reduces grade retention and special education.**

Sixteen studies of early childhood programs show a reduction in grade retention and special education rates. The studies were performed in school systems in Chicago, Houston, Milwaukee, Harlem, Washington, DC, and Pittsburgh.

The Chicago Longitudinal Study, one of the nation's largest and longest studies of public early-childhood education, showed a 40 % drop in retention and in special education placement.

Further, a study of the Pittsburgh Early Care Initiative (ECI) found that in school districts within ECI communities, the average primary grade retention rate was 23 %; for ECI children the rate was less than 2 %. In these same Pittsburgh communities the average special education placement rate was 21%; for ECI children, the rate was less than 1%.

#### **4. Early care increases high school graduation rates.**

Long-term studies in five school systems (Louisville; Rome, Ga.; Chicago, Ypsilanti; and Baltimore) show a large positive effect on the high-school graduation rate. The Chicago Longitudinal Study showed a high-school completion rate of 29 % higher than the comparison group that does not have the benefit of quality early care (50 % instead of 39 %). The benefit was greater with boys from disadvantaged homes, who have a particularly large high-school drop out rate.

Short-term studies indicate early education results in higher achievement, grade retention, and less need for special education placement. These students are more likely to graduate from high school.

#### **5. Early care increases likelihood of college education.**

The North Carolina Abecedarian Project, in which disadvantaged children were given five years of exposure to early education in a high quality pre-school setting, has demonstrated that these students are far more likely to go to college. The study looked at the participants at age 21. Researchers found that about 35 % of the young adults in the intervention group as opposed to 14 % in the control group had either graduated from or were at the time of the assessment attending a four year college or university.

#### **6. Early care has very positive employment impacts.**

Studies, including a 1997 report by the National Conference of State Legislatures, have concluded that early childhood education is critical to the productivity and earnings-power of the workforce and the nation's economic health.

An analysis of the Abecedarian study by the National Institute for Early Education found that children in high quality early care programs can expect to make roughly \$143,000 more over their lifetimes than children not receiving these benefits and that mothers of these same children can expect higher earnings — about \$133,000 more over their lifetimes ([www.nierr.org](http://www.nierr.org)). The Ypsilanti Longitudinal Study found that at age 27 participants earned \$2,000 more per year than the nonparticipating control group. In addition, 36 % of participants owned their own homes, compared to 13 % for non-participants. In the Chicago Longitudinal Study the per capita tax revenue from the improved earning power of preschool attendees was projected to be over \$20,000.

#### **7. Early care reduces crime.**

Long-term studies show that preschool programs significantly reduce the juvenile crime rate. The Chicago Longitudinal Study began in 1986 and has tracked 900 children from low-income families who participated in the Chicago School District's Child-Parent Center

Program beginning at age three. The study also looked at 500 low-income children of the same age who attended other early-childhood intervention programs.

The juvenile arrest rates for the young people in the study was 33 % lower than for children of comparable backgrounds. Violent arrests there was 41% lower. The rate of multiple violent arrests dropped by 38 percent.

These results, published in an article of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in May, 2001, confirm other studies, including the Perry Preschool Study in Ypsilanti, which found that the risk of arrest for teens and young adults can be cut in half by enrollment in quality early care.

### **8. Early care preschool is cost-effective.**

An analysis of the Chicago Longitudinal Study, shows that seven dollars are returned for every dollar spent on the program. The largest benefit was program participants' increased earnings capacity projected from higher educational attainment. Other benefits are lower criminal justice system costs, savings for crime victims, and savings on school remedial services budgets.

The Ypsilanti/Perry Study also shows a 7:1 cost-benefits ratio, with savings in the criminal justice system and reduced welfare costs, and higher taxes paid from better paying jobs.

Rand Corp analyses have confirmed these findings. Rand goes further, stating that the expenditures on education, which are focused on K-12 may be misplaced, given the pattern of brain development. Brains develop rapidly in the early years (0-4), then develop at a much slower pace from age 4 through 18.

### **9. Early education enhances quality of life.**

The Ypsilanti study showed that fewer participants received welfare benefits (59 % versus 80 % for the control group). It shows that many more women participants were married (40 % versus 8 %) and that fewer women participants had children born out of wedlock (57 % versus 83 %). In the Abecedarian study young adults in the intervention group were, on average, one year older (19.1 years) when their first child was born compared with those in the control group (17.7 years).