

Early Childhood Education

I. A

Broader BOLDER approach to Education;

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The purpose of this note is to briefly summarize research on the benefits of pre-school programs and the role they might play in closing achievement gaps. In doing so, we distinguish programs serving children of different age groups, in particular, programs serving children under the age of three and those serving children age three to five. Children have different developmental needs at these stages of early childhood, and thus the effect of a program is likely to differ depending on the child's age.

As indicated in the report, the overall message from the research suggests positive cognitive and social impacts on the lives of low-income children who participated in quality education programs prior to entering formal schooling (see recent reviews by Blau and Currie 2006; Waldfogel 2006). Moreover, to the extent that disadvantaged children benefit more from programs than more advantaged children, the provision of such programs can play an important role in closing achievement gaps (see, for example, Magnuson and Waldfogel 2005; Waldfogel and Lahaie 2007). Economic Policy Institute

Children under age three

The quality of early education programs for infants and toddlers varies widely in quality in the U.S. (Blau 2001; Shonkoff and Phillips 2000; Smolensky and Gootman 2003; Vandell and Wolfe 2002). **Some programs for infants and toddlers are of very poor quality, whether measured by child-to-staff ratio, teacher qualifications or direct observation. But, at the other end of the continuum, some infant and toddler care is of very high quality.**

The best-quality center care has been shown to yield important benefits for children, with particularly large benefits for the most disadvantaged children. When center-based care is of high quality, it enhances infants' and toddlers' cognitive development, and it does so without causing behavioral or other problems (Barnett 1995; Currie 2001; Karoly et al. 1998; Karoly, Kilburn, and Cannon 2005; Waldfogel 2002, 2006).

Children age three to five

For older preschoolers, the evidence from randomized experiments of model programs, as well as studies of more typical preschool programs, **indicates that children age 3 to 5 benefit from attending quality pre-school education programs.**

Randomized experiments of model programs have shown that **high-quality pre-school programs produce substantial cognitive gains, particularly for disadvantaged children** (Barnett 1995; Currie 2001; Karoly et al. 1998; Karoly, Kilburn, and Cannon 2005; Waldfogel 2002, 2006); **reduce later problems, such as crime (Carneiro and Heckman 2003); and enhance the future productivity of the workforce** (Heckman and Masterov 2004). **Head Start, a national program serving disadvantaged children, has positive effects on cognitive performance and behavior, as shown in a recent randomized study** (Puma et al. 2005).

Even more typical school- or center-based care programs produce cognitive gains (see review in Meyers et al. 2004; see also NICHD Early Child Care Research Network and Duncan 2003). Pre-K programs have been found to be particularly effective at raising cognitive scores (see, e.g., evidence from Oklahoma in Gormley and Gayer 2005; Gormley et al. 2005; Magnuson et al. 2004; Wong, Cook, Barnett, and Jung 2008). **Although attending pre-school has sometimes been found to be associated with more behavior problems, this is not the case for children attending pre-kindergarten and kindergarten in the same school** (Magnuson, Ruhm, and Waldfogel 2007). **Analyses of high-quality pre-kindergarten programs suggest that the savings from lower expenditures on K-12 education, child welfare, and the criminal justice system—in addition to benefits from less crime, higher earnings, and increased tax revenues—exceed the program costs** (Lynch 2007).

—Sharon Lynn Kagan and Jane Waldfogel

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I.B

Children need year-round enrichment. By ninth grade, up to two thirds of the achievement gap can be attributed to disparities in summer learning opportunities.

I.C

Feed all students well so their teachers can teach. Nearly half of elementary and one third of middle school teachers report having to bring food to class for their students.

I.D

Increase access to children's mental health services. Children exposed to toxic stress factors have a greater chance of developmental delay.

I.E

Narrowing the achievement gap requires us to attack poverty, not schools. Decades of research affirm James Coleman's findings that family and community factors are major drivers of achievement gaps.

I.F

Acknowledging poverty's impact on schools isn't excusing teachers from their responsibility. Failing to do so is excusing society from ours. We need a Broader, Bolder Approach to Education!

I.G

Early Childhood Education :

Ensure access to home visiting supports and prenatal health care. Infants whose mothers receive prenatal support through the Nurse Family Partnership program are more likely to be healthy.

I.H

Learning begins at birth, education should too. By kindergarten, poor children lag behind their better-off peers by as much as two years. It's time for a Broader, Bolder Approach to Education!

learn more and share

I.J

Provide early parenting supports to prepare all children for school. Every dollar spent on nurse visits can save up to \$6 in averted welfare, juvenile-justice, and health-care costs. It's time for a Broader, Bolder Approach to Education!

learn more and share

I.K

School Improvement

Demand a stop to NCLB that goes beyond waivers. Great schools focus on whole-child enriching education, not tests. It's time for a Broader, Bolder Approach to Education!

learn more and share

I.L

Education should expand children's horizons, not narrow their worlds. As testing of basic reading and math skills increase, critical other subjects are neglected and even omitted altogether. It's time for a Broader, Bolder Approach to Education!

I.M

Demand reliable, holistic teacher evaluations that prioritize development over elimination. High-stakes testing has led to apparent widespread cheating in Pennsylvania, Atlanta, and Washington, D.C. It's time for a Broader, Bolder Approach to Education!

I.N

Comprehensive Strategies

Effective Common Core Standards Must Support the Whole Child, and all Children. A narrow focus on some parts of the curriculum, to the exclusion of social and emotional learning, and without supports to enable all children to benefit, will only widen existing gaps. It's time for a Broader, Bolder Approach to Education!

I.O

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I.P

Expand the availability of school-based health centers. New York students with centers at school were over 50% less likely to be hospitalized for asthma than those without (10.5% versus 17%). It's time for a Broader, Bolder Approach to Education!

I.Q

Increase access to children's mental health services. Children exposed to toxic stress factors have a greater chance of developmental delay. It's time for a Broader, Bolder Approach to Education!

I.R

Feed all students well so their teachers can teach. Nearly half of elementary and one third of middle school teachers report having to bring food to class for their students.

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Ensure good nutrition for all children. High rates of severe obesity among low-income students impede their learning and classroom behavior.

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1.W

Reduce poverty to improve learning. Not a single Texas school with an 80% poverty rate prepares more than 20% of its students for college.

BBA Infographic: Return on Investment for Early Childhood education for Society

10:1 That's Nobel economist James Heckman's estimated return to society from high-quality pre-k programs' help in boosting low-income children's cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and social readiness for school and life. View the full BBA infographic to learn more.

BBA's Research Base

The BBA Bibliography provides synopses of seminal research works that demonstrate how living in poverty impedes educational attainment and the efficacy of a broader, bolder approach to education.

“While most students have teachers who are fully certified, there is a difference among racial/ethnic groups and school lunch eligibility. Black students, Hispanic students, and students eligible for school lunch are less likely than White and non-school-lunch-eligible students to have certified teachers. There has been little change in the gap over the period for which we have comparable data.

From Parsing the Achievement Gap II by Paul E. Barton and Richard J. Coley

[View the full BBA Bibliography](#)

Connecticut State Snapshot

Four-Year-Olds	
Enrolled in Preschool*	26.2%
Preschool Quality	
Benchmarks Met*	6 of 10
School-Based Health Clinics*	79

Below is a list of BBA coalition partner affiliates in Connecticut that are leading comprehensive education strategies.

Consider contacting one of these organizations if you want to build or join a BBA coalition.

Coalition for Community Schools

Hartford Community Schools

Sandra J. Ward-Director

860-695-8575

Hartford

NASBHC State Affiliates School-Based Health Clinics

Connecticut Association of School-Based Health Centers

Jesse White-Frese-Exec. Dir.

203-230-9976

North Haven

Voices for America's Children

Connecticut Voices for Children

Jamey Bell-Exec. Dir.

203-498-4240

New Haven

Promise Neighborhoods

Meriden Family Zone - Meriden Children First

David Radcliffe- Director

203-630-3566

Meriden

A BROADER, BOLDER APPROACH TO EDUCATION REFORM

The gap in achievement between high- and low-income students is large and growing. Education “reformers” assert that more testing, teacher evaluation, and charter schools will fix this problem. But evidence of poverty’s multiple impacts on student well-being suggests that, absent policies that address and alleviate them, reform is more like the status quo than real change. We need a broader, bolder approach to education!

Status Quo

Bolder Broader Approach



school readiness



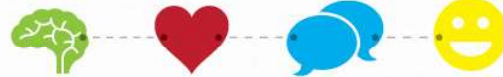
52%



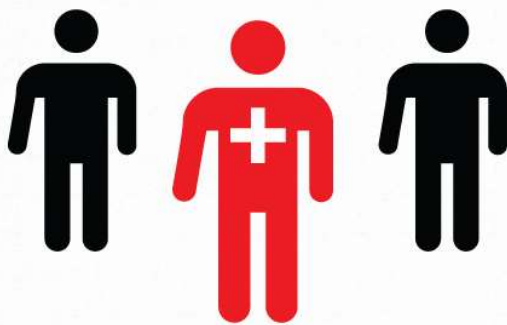
of children living in poverty arrive at kindergarten unprepared.

10:1

Nobel economist James Heckman’s estimated return to society from high-quality pre-k programs’ help in boosting low-income children’s cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and social readiness for school and life.



health



1 in 3 children

living in poverty end up in the emergency room each year due to chronic asthma attacks, unaddressed dental problems, and other preventable medical problems.



85%

decrease in total annual cost of hospitalization for children in Cincinnati in schools with SBHCs, roughly \$1,000 per student.



nutrition

