



WILDER RESEARCH, CHILD TRENDS, SRI INTERNATIONAL,  
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA.

Spring 2010

# Kindergarten Follow Up Study Project Description

Minnesota has recently invested substantial public and private resources to improve both access to and the quality of early care and education experiences for high-risk youngsters. These efforts share the specific intent of improving school readiness for all children. Results of the initiatives are becoming available, informing policy makers and the public about the *short-term* consequences of these investments.

To date, though, we have little information about the experiences of children as they move into the K-12 system in Minnesota, and about the role quality programming plays in preparing a child for ongoing school success. Further research is needed to understand how high quality programming early in a child's life predict *longer term* student outcomes and protect earlier investments. This is particularly the case for children from low income or non-English speaking families.

The purpose of this study is to

- a) describe the transition to kindergarten for a sample including many low income, non-English speaking, and non-white children in Minnesota who participated in an early care and education experience;
- b) establish the degree to which success in school is predicted by the quality of their early care and education experience; and
- c) examine how features related to their K-12 educational experiences affect their school success over the long and short term.

Since 2007 the Minnesota Early Learning Foundation (MELF), in partnership with state and local agencies, has funded several innovative approaches to early care and education. The first cohort of children who participated in these programs transitioned into the K-12 system in Fall 2009. *This provides a unique opportunity to highlight the relationship between early care and later school success for a significant sample of children in this state.* The work described here holds broad research, policy, and practice implications for Minnesota and beyond.

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