Highly Effective Preschool Program Practices

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Early Childhood Education Contributes to Children’s Development

Evidence from

• Brain science
• Program evaluation
Early Childhood Experience Affects Brain Development

Normal 4 year old

Orphanage-reared 4-year-old

Red = glucose activity

Thinking

Emotions

Automatic functions

HighScope
INSPIRING EDUCATORS to INSPIRE CHILDREN
Short- and Long-Term Effects from Three Studies

- Childhood intellectual performance
- Teen school achievement
- Fewer teen births
- Placements in regular classes
- High school graduation
- Adult earnings
- Fewer crimes
- Up to $16 return on the dollar
HighScope Perry Preschool Study

Major Findings Over Time

- Ready for school at 5
  - Program group: 28%
  - No-program group: 67%

- Committed to school at 14
  - Program group: 38%
  - No-program group: 61%

- Basic achievement at 14
  - Program group: 15%
  - No-program group: 49%

- High school graduate
  - Program group: 60%
  - No-program group: 77%

- Earned $20K+ at 40
  - Program group: 40%
  - No-program group: 60%

- Arrested 5+ times by 40
  - Program group: 36%
  - No-program group: 55%
HighScope Perry Preschool Study

Large Return on Investment
(Per participant in 2008 constant dollars discounted 3% annually)

Benefits

- School Earnings
- Taxes
- Crime & Justice System

Costs

- $18,479

$0 $50,000 $100,000 $150,000 $200,000 $250,000 $300,000

$16.14 per dollar invested
But Other Studies Find Only Modest Effects

- Recent studies find only modest short-term effects on children’s literacy and social skills
- These programs are poor candidates for long-term effects and return on investment
Implication

To Get What We Got...

Do What We Did
Five Ingredients of Highly Effective Preschool Programs

1. Include low-income children
2. Have and support enough qualified teachers
3. Learn and use a validated, interactive child development curriculum
4. Spend a lot of time with parents
5. Continuously assess program quality and child development
1. Include Low-Income and At-Risk Children

- Serving all young children includes needy children.
- But long-term effects are seldom looked for and yet to be found for middle-income children.
- Tulsa universal pre-k study found large effects on early school achievement.
2. Have and Support Enough Qualified Teachers.

- Qualified = Teaching certificate and bachelor’s degree.
- Curriculum-based supervision and systematic inservice training.
- Two qualified adults for 16-20 four-year-olds per class, fewer younger children.
3. Learn and Use a Validated, Interactive Child Development Curriculum.

- **Learn**: Requires interactive training, study, and practice
- **Validated**: Evidence of effectiveness with children to be served
- **Interactive**: Children and teachers design learning activities
- **Child Development**: All aspects of development
4. Teachers Spend a Lot of Time With Parents.

- Meet with parents and children regularly
- Focus on children’s development
- Include center and home caregivers.
5. Continuously Assess Program Quality and Child Development.

- Assess implementation of an effective program model.
- Assess children’s developing school readiness.
- Attune teaching to assessment.