

Importance of early childhood education [US] ^[1]

Author: Brower, Dr. Robert

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AVAILABILITY

See text below.

EXCERPTS

The research on the importance of early childhood education is becoming more and more convincing with each research study conducted around the world.

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Learning and knowledge tend to be exponential in nature and not arithmetic...meaning, with each new piece of knowledge exposure comes an exponential explosion of further learning. Everything learned early in life is used for mastering new challenges later in life. As redundant and nonsensical as this next statement may appear on the surface, these five words hold resoundingly truths..."We must know to know." We cannot build on knowledge and learning in which we have not been exposed. Yogi Berra once was credited with saying, "You don't know what you don't know." There is profound truth in that statement that applies to early childhood education. Children must be exposed to quality learning environments at a very early age if they are to develop cognitively to their potential. The following research is shared here for the reader's perusal.

* According to research conducted by the Education Commission of the States, investments in early childhood programs have stronger and longer lasting achievement benefits than remediation or class size reduction.

* At least 43 states now mandate some form of pre-school programming (Indiana is not one of them). At North Montgomery, we now have a Four-Year-Old Learning Academy at Pleasant Hill Elementary...one of the first of its kind in Indiana. This program targets youngsters most at risk and costs nothing to the parents...thus ensuring we reach those students most in need of extra help.

* In examining the High/Scope Foundation's Perry Preschool Project research, the benefits gained in these preschool education programs continue forward at least four decades later. These remarkable benefits can be seen in the form of more stable and productive lives than those of their peers, who did not have the same high-quality preschool experiences.

* The renowned Abecedarian Project in Chapel Hill, NC that enrolled poor students in a high quality preschool program that has gone year-round since 1972 found that IQ scores were significantly and positively impacted by this early intervention. This same group of tested students had IQ's that were equal to the national average as compared to much lower IQ's for the control group, who did not attend a preschool program. These students maintained their higher than average reading achievement up to age 15...the last time they were tested for this research

* The Chicago public school system that started high quality preschool programs has seen similar results at 15 different sites. Those students exposed to high quality preschool programs had much higher graduation rates, higher standardized test scores, and better attendance rates.

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* Most researches believe that the primary optimum cognitive language development has a window of 9 months to 8 years of age with age 10 being the end of the maximum learning development window. This does not mean that children and adults cannot learn or develop cognitively beyond this window, because they can, it is just infinitely more difficult. The brain is like a "sponge" at these earlier threshold ages and expecting those children beyond these benchmark time periods to make up this growing gap in cognitive development is akin to expecting a person, running a 26 mile marathon with a 24 mile deficit, to catch up and beat a seasoned runner, who has this huge head start...it becomes nearly impossible.

North Montgomery's Four-Year-Old Learning Center at Pleasant Hill has been a huge challenge for us, but it will pay huge dividends long term for the 24 children enrolled in this program. At some point, we hope to establish a three-year-old center as well. This Early Learning Center is but one research-driven aspect of North Montgomery's Bratton Initiatives. If only schools could reach every child that needs help as early as humanly possible, America's so-called problems with public education would evaporate.

Region: United States ^[2]

Tags: poverty ^[3]

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