

Investing in our future: The evidence base on preschool education ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Full report in pdf ^[2]

Excerpts from executive summary:

Quality preschool education can benefit middle-class children as well as disadvantaged children; typically developing children as well as children with special needs; and dual language learners as well as native speakers. Although early research focused only on programs for low-income children, more recent research focusing on universal preschool programs provides the opportunity to ask if preschool can benefit children from middle-income as well as low-income families. The evidence is clear that middle-class children can benefit substantially, and that benefits outweigh costs for children from middle-income as well as those from low-income families. However, children from low-income backgrounds benefit more. Children with special needs who attended Tulsa's preschool program showed comparable improvements in reading and pre-writing skills as typically developing children. Further, at the end of first grade, children with special needs who had attended Head Start as 3-year-olds showed stronger gains in math and social-emotional development than children with special needs who had not attended Head Start. Studies of both Head Start and public preschool programs suggest that dual language learners benefit as much as, and in some cases more than, their native speaker counterparts.

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The analysis was conducted by a coalition of 10 researchers from across the country and funded by the Foundation for Child Development. It was presented in Washington, D.C., at an event put on by The New America Foundation.

Watch the panel discussion at The New America Foundation event. ^[3]

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