

## 1. Readiness to Learn / Early Childhood Programs

- a. *Head Start Program:* The ultimate goal of Head Start is children's social competence. This refers to the child's everyday effectiveness in dealing with both his or her present environment and later responsibilities in school and life. It takes into account the interrelatedness of cognitive, emotional, and social development; physical and mental health; and nutritional needs. Social competence has five objectives which support it. (1) Enhance Children's Growth and Development, (2) Strengthen Families as the Primary Nurturers of Their Children, (3) Provide Children with Educational, Health and Nutritional Services, (4) Link Children and Families to Needed Community Services, and (5) Ensure Well-Managed Programs that Involve Parents in Decision-making. Various studies have confirmed positive outcomes.

*For more information, see:*

First Progress Report on the Head Start Program Performance Measures, May 15, 1997. Prepared for: Admin. on Children, Youth and Families, Head Start Bureau, by Caliber Associates, Ellsworth Associates, Westat, Mathematica Policy Research, [http://www2.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb/html/final\\_report.html](http://www2.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb/html/final_report.html)

- b. *Long-term Effects of Early Childhood Programs:* Long term studies of programs such as preschool, Head Start, child care, and pre-kindergarten found enhancements in cognitive achievements and social outcomes. Children who attended showed less placement in special education classes or grade retainment later in their education. They were also more likely to graduate from high school, and less likely to be involved in future delinquent and criminal behavior. Model programs which combined home visits with center-based child development services were associated with less aggressive behavior. Two criminal justice studies showed that program children had fewer contacts with the criminal justice system. One study that followed its subjects through age 27 also found that preschool participants had fewer out-of-wedlock births, relied less on social services as adults, and had higher average earnings than individuals in the control group.

*For more information, see:*

Gomby, D.S., Lerner, M.B., Stevenson, C.S., Lewit, E.M., and Behrman, R.E. (1995) Long-Term Outcomes of Early Childhood Programs: Analysis and Recommendations. *The Future of Children*, 5(3), 6-24.

- c. *Early-childhood programs for low income families:* Thirty-six studies of model demonstration projects and large-scale public programs were reviewed to examine the long-term effects on children from low-income families. Results indicate that some early childhood programs can produce large short-term benefits for children on intelligence quotient (IQ) and sizable long-term effects on school achievement, grade retention, placement in special education, and social adjustment.

*For more information, see:*

Barnett, W.S. (1995). Long-Term Effects of Early Childhood Programs: Cognitive and School Outcomes. *The Future of Children*, 5(3), 25-50.

- d. *Early-childhood programs on social outcomes and delinquency:* Early-childhood programs which seek to ameliorate factors associated with later antisocial or delinquent behavior report positive results on a broad range of child and family risk factors for delinquency. There is also promising evidence of their cost effectiveness. Programs demonstrating long-term effects on crime and antisocial behavior tended to be those that combined early-childhood education and family support services. Four programs were evaluated: High/Scope Perry Preschool Project, Syracuse University Family Development Research Program, Yale Child Welfare Project, and Houston Parent Child Development Center. Overall, results indicated that the program participants committed fewer delinquent or criminal acts with less later involvement with the juvenile justice system. Antisocial behavior was decreased in the Yale Project and the Houston Center.

*For more information, see:*

Yoshikawa, H. (1995) Long-Term Effects of Early Childhood Programs on Social Outcomes and Delinquency. *The Future of Children*, 5(3), 51-75.

- e. *Even Start:* The goal of Even Start is to help break the cycle of illiteracy and poverty by improving the educational opportunities available to low-income families with limited educational experiences. After one year of participation, Even Start children scored significantly higher on the Preschool Inventory (PSI), a test of school readiness, than children in a randomly assigned control group. Children who remained in Even Start more than one year may grow at a faster-than-expected rate both on the PSI and on the Preschool Language Scale (PLS). A substantial body of research shows that gains are enhanced by exposure to a high-quality, center-based program; adults and children with high levels of participation in Even Start's core services had larger learning gains than those with low levels of participation, and children in projects emphasizing center-based (as contrasted with home-based) programs had larger learning gains. Findings from the first national evaluation showed a positive relationship between the amount of parenting education received and children's vocabulary test scores.

*For more information, see:*

Even Start: Evidence from the Past and a Look to the Future. Planning and Evaluation Service Analysis and Highlights. <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/EvenStart/highlights.html>.

- f. *Full-day Kindergarten:* Research studies confirm that attendance in developmentally appropriate full-day kindergarten results in academic and social benefits for students, at least in the primary grades. Those in full-day kindergarten programs (compared to half-day or alternate day programs) exhibited more independent learning, classroom involvement, productivity in work with peers, and reflectiveness than half-day kindergartners. They were also more likely to approach the teacher and expressed less withdrawal, anger, shyness, and blaming behavior.

*For more information, see:*

Cryan, J., Sheehan, R., Weichel, J., and Bandy-Hedden, I.G. (1992). Success Outcomes of Full-day Kindergarten: More Positive Behavior and Increased Achievement in the Years After. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 7(2, June), 187-203. EJ 450 525.

Holmes, C.T., and McConnell, B.M. (1990). Full-day versus Half-day Kindergarten: An Experimental Study. Unpublished paper. ED 369 540.

Karweit, N. (1992). The Kindergarten Experience. *Educational Leadership*, 49 (6, Mar), 82-86. EJ 441 182.

Rothenberg, D. (1995). Full-Day Kindergarten Programs. *ERIC Digest*: ED 382410