



REPRODUCTIVE EQUITY NOW

Benefits of Quality, Affordable Childcare and Early Childhood Education

- Children’s brains develop faster from birth to age 5 than any other time in their lives. In fact, 90% of brain development occurs before a child enters kindergarten.¹
- Children from the poorest families learned approximately 30 million fewer words than those from more affluent families by age three.²
- Only 51% of 3-and-4 year olds in the U.S. are enrolled in full-day pre-primary programs, with no improvement in the last 15 years.³
- Children in early childhood education programs are:⁴
 - Less likely to repeat a grade
 - Less likely to be identified as having special needs
 - More prepared academically for later grades
 - More likely to graduate from high school
 - Higher earners in the workforce
- Children who receive early childhood education are 25% more likely to graduate high school and four times more likely to complete a bachelor’s degree.⁵
- The link between early childhood education and future success was illustrated by a study called the Abecedarian Early Intervention Project. This study monitored children in two groups for more than 35 years: one that experienced early childhood education and one that did not. The children in the group that received early childhood education were more successful academically and financially. They also had better mental and physical health overall.⁶
- In 2009, Washington D.C. began rolling out its universal preschool program. Today, three-quarters of preschool-aged kids are enrolled in the district. Once they introduced free preschool, labor force participation for women with young children

¹ [Top Five Benefits of Early Childhood Education, Brighter Futures Indiana \(2022\)](#), (last visited Aug 9, 2022).

² [The early catastrophe: The 30 million word gap by age 3](#), Hart, B., & Risley, T. R. (1995), *American Educator*, 27(1), 4-9.

³ [The 13 Key Benefits of Early Childhood Education: A Teacher’s Perspective](#) | Arizona Early Childhood, Arizona Early Childhood (2015).

⁴ [National Education Association, Early Childhood Education](#) | NEA, Nea.org (2021).

⁵ [Why Early Childhood Education Is a Critical Issue To Support, Start Early \(2022\)](#).

⁶ [Abecedarian: An Early Childhood Education Approach that has a Rich History and a Vibrant Present](#), Sparling, J., Meunier, K. (2019), *IJEC* 51, 207–216



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increased nearly 10%. The impact for low-income mothers was even higher, at 15%.⁷

- When children are taken care of, parents have the freedom to work and advance in their own careers. Lost earnings due to poor or non-existent child care totals \$57 billion per year. By giving parents care options, early childhood education has a significant positive impact on the economy.⁸
- Every dollar invested in early childhood programs yields a \$6.30 return on investment, as both the children in these programs and their parents grow to become more financially independent and less likely to need government assistance.⁹
- The Perry Project, the longest running longitudinal study on early education, found that children in a high-quality preschool program (as opposed to no preschool education) were far less likely to be arrested later in life, more likely to graduate high school, and more likely to have a high IQ.¹⁰

⁷ [Early childhood education yields few academic benefits — but still has lifelong effects](#), Kelsey Piper, Vox (2018).

⁸ [5 Reasons Why the Importance of ECE Is Impossible to Ignore](#), Kirsten Slyter (2019).

⁹ [The Lifecycle Benefits of an Influential Early Childhood Program - The Heckman Equation](#), The Heckman Equation (2017).

¹⁰ [Perry Preschool Project](#) - HighScope, HighScope (2018).