

Do the Long-term Benefits of Early Ed Last or “Fade Out?”

The long-term benefits of high-quality early learning programs are multi-faceted and life-long. So long, in fact, they extend into future generations.

Learning Benefits. Rigorous third-party research has found that Minnesota children in quality Parent Aware-rated programs were making significant gains on kindergarten-readiness measures, such as phonics, social competence, executive function, persistence, early math skills, vocabulary, and early literacy skills. Moreover, low-income children were found to be making even greater gains than the full sample of children.

Those gains give children the building blocks they need to succeed throughout their school careers. For instance, phonics and vocabulary are necessary precursors for literacy development and every academic pursuit that requires literacy. While it’s appropriate to discuss whether the K-12 system is doing everything possible to help young children build on those gains, there is no question quality early learning programs are doing their part.

Community Benefits. To thrive over the long-term, Minnesota needs residents who are productive, law-abiding, and in stable families. Compared to disadvantaged children who *could not* access quality early learning programs, disadvantaged children who *were* given that opportunity experience lifelong benefits:

- **5x less likely to be a frequent adult offender;**
- **4x less likely to have adult drug arrests;**
- **Half as likely to use public assistance;**
- **Half as likely to become pregnant as a teen;**
- **1.6x more likely to be employed;**
- **3.5x more likely to be parenting married;**
- **3x more likely to own a home.**
 - **Intergenerational Benefits.** These benefits not only do not fade out, they extend into future generations. Parents that received high-quality early learning were able to build the foundations for stronger family lives. That resulted in larger gains for their children, who were more educated, healthy, gainfully employed citizens than their peers whose parents hadn’t had the same opportunities.

Taxpayer Benefits. Numerous economists have documented that every \$1 invested in helping low-income children access quality early learning programs generates up to \$16 in taxpayer benefits. That’s primarily because those children generate fewer lifelong costs related to special education, unemployment, income supports, human services, health care, law enforcement and prisons. These taxpayer benefits multiply over time, rather than fading out.