

Early Childhood Education Research Summaries of the Effects of Universal Kindergarten

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Initial Academic Gains Disappear Within A Few Years

1. "Research on preschool and full-day kindergarten shows that these programs have had meaningful short-term effects on disadvantaged students' cognitive ability, grade-level retention and special-education placement. However, most research also indicates that the academic effects of early education programs disappear soon after children leave the programs." ¹
2. After a careful six-year study of 35,000 children, Durham University reported that early education programs did not improve the development and skills of children entering primary school. ²
3. "The National Center for Education Statistics' Early Childhood Longitudinal Study of 22,000 children showed that by the end of the 3rd grade, there was no academic difference between children who attended kindergarten part time and those who attended full time." ³
4. Dr. Sebastian Sugate, a researcher at the University of Otago, uncovered quantitative evidence that "teaching children to read from age five is not likely to make that child any more successful at reading than a child who learns reading later, from age seven." ⁴
5. According to Dr. Matthew Ladner's 2007 study, the academic benefits of full-day kindergarten disappear by the 5th grade. ⁵
6. Two high-intervention, small-scale programs have showed lasting gains in some areas, Perry Preschool (1962) and Abecedarian (1972). However, when states have tried to scale these programs up, the long-term gains disappear. The gains from the small, "boutique" programs cannot be replicated on a large scale. ⁶
7. Lisa Snell wrote in reference to early childhood education legislative proposals: "Michigan is considering investing hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars each year in a program whose benefits disappear by 3rd grade to solve education problems that come after the 3rd grade." ⁷

Behavior and Academic Harms Resulting from Early Education

8. The RAND Corporation reported in 2006 that a study of almost 7,900 students found that "full-day kindergarten programs may actually be detrimental to mathematics and nonacademic readiness skills." ⁸

9. According to Dr. David Elkind, professor of child development at Tufts University in New York, “Hurried children ... constitute many of the young people experiencing school failure, those involved in delinquency and drugs, and those who are committing suicide.”⁹
10. Dr. David Elkind has stated that the summary of the research strongly suggests that when children receive academic instruction too early (generally before age six or seven), they are put at risk for no apparent gain. Dr. Elkind further stated, “If we do not wake up to the potential danger of these harmful practices, we may do serious damage to a large segment of the next generation.”¹⁰
11. Dr. Raymond Moore said: “What the child needs most to grow well is a warm one-to-one relationship with a parent (or parent figure) who is always there to comfort and guide him. During the first crucial eight years, home should be the child’s only nest and parents the teachers of their children.”¹¹

Boys Are Harmed More Than Girls From Early Formal Education

12. Leonard Sax, M.D., Ph.D., wrote in his book *Boys Adrift*, that physiologically boys’ brains and girls’ brains develop differently. For instance, the parts of the brain most involved in integrating information (i.e., sight, touch, taste, smell, hearing) develop in girls at a rate roughly two years ahead of boys.¹²
13. An Educational Horizons article explains that this more rapid development of the left hemisphere of the brain in girls enables them to learn to read and write earlier than boys. “Its primary responsibility is auditory processing and verbal expression, such as listening, speaking, and writing.” However, the right hemisphere, which develops sooner in boys, “has the primary responsibility for visual-spatial and visual-motor activities, such as [are used in] sports, architecture, sculpture, painting, and carpentry.”¹³
14. In a study of 1st- through 6th-graders it was noted that 70% of readers with visual, perceptual, or refractive problems were boys.¹⁴
15. Many studies suggest that the decreased self-esteem experienced by boys has resulted in much of their antisocial and delinquent behavior. This can be traced to the failures in their early school experiences due to their comparatively slower development.¹⁵
16. Replicated research has consistently demonstrated that on the average girls develop formal academic skills at an earlier age than boys.¹⁶
17. Stanley Krippner’s research showed that boys make up 90% of disabled readers. This is supported by Bickel & Maynard in their 2004 paper on “No Child Left Behind.”¹⁷

Lifelong Vision Handicap Caused by Early Childhood Education

18. Dr. Henry Hilgartner, in a 1963 paper to the Texas Medical Society, noted that children’s eyes, up to about the age of 8 or 9, are more plastic than older eyes, and the outer covering of the eye (sclera) can be distorted by undue strain. Until a youngster’s eyes have developed more, they should not read much. This also means that brighter children could have a greater risk if they are in a regular reading program before they are 8 years old.¹⁸

19. Multiple studies over a period of 100 years, beginning in the late 1800s, demonstrate that close eye work can result in astigmatism and myopia, especially close eye work by young children.¹⁹
20. According to the American Optometric Association, “There is ... growing evidence that nearsightedness may be caused by the stress of too much close vision work. It normally first occurs in school-age children. Since the eye continues to grow during childhood, nearsightedness generally develops before age 20.”²⁰
21. Studies in Japan and Alaska strongly indicate that the introduction of compulsory education, with the attendant close work required of young children, has resulted in significant increases of cases of myopia in those societies.²¹
22. Educator John Dewey, Ph.D., was aware that children’s eyes develop first to look at larger objects and at a distance. In 1898 he reported that when children have to focus on close work or small objects over extended periods of time, unnecessary stress and strain would develop. According to Dewey, children should not be required to engage in this type of work until about 8 years of age.²²
23. Dr. Chen Tzay-jinn, director-general of the Health Promotion Bureau under the Department of Health in Taiwan, observed, “The growth of nearsightedness among young children is thought to result from learning to read very young and using computers very young.”²³
24. “Myopia may simply develop as a result of excessive near work....”²⁴
25. Lin Lung-kuang, ophthalmology professor at National Taiwan University, said, “Myopia cannot be cured. We have to prevent children from becoming nearsighted. Don’t let them use their vision too early.”²⁵

¹ Lisa Snell, “Don’t Expect Long-term Gain from Early Education Money,” *Michigan Education Report* (Aug. 15, 2007) Para. 3. Available at <http://www.educationreport.org/8835>.

² “Government’s Early Years Education Measures Yet to Make an Impact,” *Durham University News* (Aug. 28, 2007). Available at <http://www.dur.ac.uk/news/newsitem/?itemno=5685>.

³ Lisa Snell, “Don’t Expect Long-term Gain from Early Education Money,” *Michigan Education Report* (Aug. 15, 2007) Para. 4. Available at <http://www.educationreport.org/8835>.

⁴ “Late Readers Close Learning Gap”; Dr. Sebastian Sugate, University of Otago, New Zealand (Jan. 3, 2010) Para. 1. Available at <http://www.sciencealert.com.au/news/20100401-20448.html>.

⁵ Matthew Ladner, Ph.D., Goldwater Institute, “Putting Arizona Education Reform to the Test: School Choice and Early Education Expansion” (2007) Para. 5. Available at <http://goldwaterinstitute.org/sites/default/files/Putting%20Reform%20to%20the%20Test.pdf>.

⁶ Lindsay M. Burke & Rachel Sheffield, “Universal Preschool’s Empty Promises,” *The Heritage Foundation, Background* No. 2773 (March 12, 2013) pp. 3-4. Available at http://thf_media.s3.amazonaws.com/2013/pdf/bg2773.pdf.

⁷ Lisa Snell, “Don’t Expect Long-term Gain from Early Education Money,” *Michigan Education Report* (Aug. 15, 2007) Para. 14. Available at <http://www.educationreport.org/8835>.

⁸ Lisa Snell, “Don’t Expect Long-term Gain from Early Education Money,” *Michigan Education Report* (Aug. 15, 2007) Para. 6. Available at <http://www.educationreport.org/8835>; also see <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG558.html>.

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- ⁹ David Elkind, Ph.D., *The Hurried Child: Growing Up Too Fast, Too Soon* (1981) p. xii.
- ¹⁰ David Elkind, Ph.D., *Miseducation: Preschoolers at Risk* (1987; New York: Knopf) pp. 3-4.
- ¹¹ Raymond S. Moore, Ph.D., *Better Late Than Early* (1975) p. 3.
- ¹² Leonard Sax, M.D., Ph.D., *Boys Adrift* (New York, Basic Books, 2007) p. 17.
- ¹³ Betsy Gunzelmann & Diane Connell, "The New Gender Gap: Social, Psychological, Neuro-biological and Educational Perspectives," *Education Horizons* (2006) p. 5.
- ¹⁴ Howard M. Coleman, "Visual Perception and Reading Dysfunction." *Journal of Learning Disabilities* (February 1968) pp. 116-123.
- ¹⁵ Donald P. Flammer, "Self-Esteem, Parent Identification and Sex Role Development in Preschool Age Boys and Girls," *Child Study Journal* (1971) pp. 39-45;
- D. L. Mumpower, "Sex Ratios Found in Various Types of Referred Exception Children," *Exceptional Child* (1970) pp. 621-622;
- Norma Estelle Cutts & Nicholas Moseley, *Teaching the Disorderly Pupil in Elementary and Secondary School* (1957).
- ¹⁶ Leonard Sax, M.D., Ph.D., *Boys Adrift* (New York, Basic Books, 2007) pp. 17-40.
- ¹⁷ Stanley Krippner, Address to 21st Annual School Vision Forum and Reading Conference (1968) p. 4. Available at <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED027151.pdf>.
- Robert Bickle & A. Stan Maynard, "Group and Interaction Effects with 'No Child Left Behind': Gender and Reading in a Poor Appalachian District," *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, Vol. 12 (2004). Available at <http://epaa.asu.edu/ojs/article/view/160>.
- ¹⁸ Henry L. Hilgartner, M.D., *The Frequency of Myopia in Individuals Under 21 Years of Age*. Paper presented to the Texas Medical Society, Austin, Texas (1962). (Cited by Dr. Raymond S. Moore on p. 70 of *Better Late Than Early*.)
- ¹⁹ Alexander Eulenberg, "The Case for the Preventability of Myopia," (March 3, 1996). Available at http://www.i-see.org/prevent_myopia.html.
- ²⁰ "Myopia (Nearsightedness)," American Optometric Association (2001) Para. 2–3. Available at <http://www.aoa.org/myopia.xml>.
- ²¹ Donald S. Rehm, "The Prevention of Acquired Myopia" (1974).
- ²² John Dewey, Ph.D., "The Primary Education Fetish" *Forum* (1898 vol. 25) cited in *Better Late Than Early*, Dr. Raymond S. Moore.
- ²³ Dr. Chen Tzay-jinn received his master's degree in public health from Harvard University and graduated from the National Taiwan University's School of Medicine. He lives and works in Taiwan. Since his position as director-general of the Health Promotion Bureau, he has served as head of the central region Department of Health and the director-general of the Center for Disease Control.
- Liu Shao-hua, "Myopia Increases Among Children," *Taipei Times* (Dec. 6, 2000). Available at <http://www.myopia.org/myopiaprevalence.htm>.
- ²⁴ "Orthokeratology and Myopia—Children's Vision Visual Requirements": Public Service Pamphlet No. 18106 W-B" (1975) San Bernardino Optometric Vision Care Center.
- ²⁵ Liu Shao-hua, "Myopia Increases Among Children," *Taipei Times* (Dec. 6, 2000). Available at <http://www.myopia.org/myopiaprevalence.htm>.