



Making the Case for Early Learning & Development Investments

A strong body of research conclusively shows the impact of a rich array of early learning and development (ELD) initiatives on many measures of K-12 student success, from graduation rates to student achievement, as well as positive effects on cognitive and social outcomes. This research provides two direct linkages between **Early Learning and Development (ELD)** and **Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)**. *First*, it demonstrates that ELD's impacts are particularly strong for those students LCFF was specifically designed to support: high-needs children, specifically low-income, English learners and foster youth, who disproportionately enter kindergarten underprepared to learn, struggle to catch up, and often miss the key milestones that are essential to future opportunity and success. *Second*, research demonstrates a proven impact of ELD on at least four of the eight state priorities that are required to be included in the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) planning and reporting. To support your understanding of the benefits of ELD, we encapsulate the key research findings related to LCFF objectives below.

The Impact of Quality ELD in Relation to LCFF State Priorities: Key Findings

ELD and High-Needs Kids: What Research Tells Us

In high quality ELD settings – where there is a focus on language-rich interactions between kids and well-trained teachers and caregivers – kids not only gain academic knowledge, but also develop critical learning skills, such as paying attention, regulating emotions, following directions, and completing tasks. Numerous studies demonstrate that these effects are stronger for high-needs kids than for their peers – as seen in much of the research cited below. Yet, we also know that given program costs,^{xxi,xxii} students with the greatest needs are the least likely to access the ELD opportunities that can better prepare them for success in school long-term.^{xxiii}



Student Achievement

- Over 120 studies – including one evaluating 31 school districts in New Jersey – found that children attending high-quality preschool produced gains through high school equivalent to at least half the achievement gap between low-income and other students.^{xxiv}
- Preschools that are part of the California State Preschool program produced gains of seven percentiles for language and math, with even larger gains for specific literacy skills.^{xxv}
- Perry Preschool kids outperformed their peers on intellectual, language, and school achievement tests. At age 14, the study found that 49% of participants met “basic achievement” levels, versus 15% of the control group.^{xxvi}
- Abecedarian Project participants had higher reading and math achievement scores throughout the school years up to age 15.^{xxvii}
- Quality preschool programs can reduce special education placements by up to 48%.^{xxviii}
- Quality, evidence-based home visiting programs produced statistically significant benefits for children, including increases in school readiness.^{xxix}
- 82% of low-income children who participated in the Parents as Teachers home visiting program and attended preschool were ready for school at kindergarten entry – a higher percentage than their affluent peers who did not participate.^{xxx}

Please see *Education Primer Leveraging the Local Control Funding Formula* for reference citations.



Student Engagement

- Early academic performance in preschool and early elementary is one of the most consistent predictors for dropping out of high-school.^{xxxii}
 - The high school graduation rate for mothers in California's Cal-SAFE program, which provides academic and support services to teen parents and their children, was a full 55 percentage points higher than the overall rate for teen mothers - 75% vs. 20%.^{xxxiii}
 - The Perry Preschool program produced better high school graduation rates compared to the no-program group - 77% vs. 60%.^{xxxiii}
 - Abecedarian Project participants were more likely to still be in school at age 21 - 42% vs. 20% of the control group - and more likely to have graduated from or be attending a four-year college - 36% vs. 14%.^{xxxiv}
 - Participants in Chicago Parent-Child Centers were more likely to finish high school (82% vs. 75%) than their peers.^{xxxv}
 - A review of more than 120 studies found that quality preschool favorably impacted social abilities and school progress.^{xxxvi}
 - A study of over 600 California kids found that those who attended a quality preschool program were absent an average 4.5 fewer days in kindergarten than their peers.^{xxxvii}
 - Children enrolled in Cal-SAFE were more likely to be up-to-date on their immunizations (by 13 percentage points) than the California average.^{xxxviii}
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School Climate (e.g. suspension/expulsion, school connectedness)

- Perry Preschool participants were less likely to be involved in crime than the control group, in particular, committing fewer drug crimes in early adulthood (9% vs. 25%).^{xxxix}
 - Quality preschool positively impacts the development of kids' self-esteem, achievement, social behavior, and motivation to solve problems, complete tasks, and improve their own abilities.^{xl}
 - Long-term impacts of one high-quality home visiting program include a 59% decrease in youth arrests.^{xli}
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Parent Involvement

- Parents who are engaged in their child's preschool education are more likely to remain engaged during elementary school.^{xlii}
- Parents of children in the Perry Preschool program had more positive attitudes toward their children's schooling at age 15 than parents of children in the control group.^{xliii}
- The Nurse-Family Partnership home visiting program produced a 48% reduction in child abuse and neglect.^{xliv}
- Parents of Head Start preschool children are more likely than non-Head Start parents to read to their children frequently.^{xlv}
- Parents whose children were enrolled in a quality infant and toddler care program were more likely to read to them daily than control group parents (57% vs. 52%) and were more supportive of their kids' efforts to develop language and learning abilities.^{xlvi}