



# The Evidence Base for Child Care- Early Head Start Partnerships

## Three High-Quality Programs with Long-Term Benefits

Evidence for the potential benefits of investing California funds in Child Care-Early Head Start Partnerships comes from rigorous randomized control trial (RCT) evaluations of three highly regarded programs that integrate health and family support with high quality early learning.

**Early Head Start (EHS)** provides intensive, comprehensive high-quality child development and family support services with a two-generation approach to 5,576 pregnant women and 146,403 low-income infants and toddlers and their families (2016-2017 data).

The EHS evaluation investigated the program's impact on 3001 randomly assigned children in 17 sites across the nation. The highly respected evaluation showed improved:

- cognitive, language and social-emotional development;
- kindergarten readiness;
- parenting practices; and
- higher parental employment or participation in job training.

Evidence of positive impact was documented from age 3, when the children were first comprehensively evaluated, to age 10. (Love et al, 2002, 2005).

**The Abecedarian Project** provided high-quality child care, primary medical care, nutritional supplements and family support services to 111 low income children, beginning in infancy and lasting through age 8. Abecedarian has shown positive program impact throughout childhood and into the participants mid-lives, including better economic well-being and health almost four decades later (Ramey & Ramey, 2004; Campbell et al, 2012; Sonnier-Netto et al, 2017; (Garcia, Heckman, Leaf, & Prados, 2017; Heckman Equation, 2018).

**The Infant Health and Development Program (IHDP)** served 985 premature and low birthweight infants to age 3, in 8 sites nationally, providing child care integrated with family support; medical and developmental screening; early intervention services; and home visiting. IHDP children had higher cognitive and language abilities by age 3. As school age children, they scored better on language and math assessments, even at age 18. (McCormick et al, 2006).

## Child Outcomes by Age

### Age 3

**EHS** children showed better language and cognitive abilities and less aggressive behaviors (Love et al, 2002, 2005).

**Abecedarian Project** children had significantly higher cognitive abilities than nonparticipating children (Ramey & Ramey, 2004).

Low-income, low birthweight premature children who participated in the **IHDP** had significantly better language and cognitive abilities and more positive behaviors. (Child Trends 2002; McCormick et al, 2006).

### Age 5

**EHS** children who subsequently participated in formal child care, including Head Start, sustained gains and were more kindergarten-ready. Children identified as needing early intervention services were more likely to receive them. (Love et al, 2005).

**Abecedarian Project** children continued to show significantly higher cognitive abilities (Ramey and Ramey, 2004).

### Ages 8 - 15

**EHS** children showed greater social competence at 5<sup>th</sup> grade. (Vogel et al, 2010).

**IHDP** children who were in the “heavier” low birth weight stratum (between 4.4 and 5.5 lbs) had higher cognitive abilities, reading and math scores at age 8 (Mc Carton et al, 1997).

**Abecedarian Project** children were significantly less likely to have repeated a grade by age 8 (Ramey et al, 1987); scored higher on reading and achievement tests between the ages of 8 and 15 (Campbell & Ramey, 1995); and had significantly lower rates of special education placement by age 15 (Campbell & Ramey, 1995).

### Ages 18 - 30

By age 18, **IHDP** children who were in the “heavier” low birth weight stratum continued to score higher on math and reading achievement tests and had fewer risky behaviors (antisocial behavior; suicide thoughts/behaviors; smoking, marijuana or alcohol use) (Mc Cormick et al, 2006).

By age 21, almost 70% of the **Abecedarian Project** children were attending college or employed in a skilled job, compared to 40% of the children in the control group (Campbell et al, 2002).

By age 30, **Abecedarian Project** children were 4 times more likely to hold a bachelor's degree and be employed. They also had delayed initial parenthood by about two years more than the control group (Campbell et al, 2012).

### Ages 35 - 44

By age 35, **Abecedarian Project** children were significantly less likely to have prehypertension and to be at risk for coronary heart disease (Campbell et al, 2014).

By age 44, **Abecedarian Project** children were significantly more likely to be fully employed, own a home, a car, a computer and both savings and checking accounts. They also reported better relationships with their own parents (Sonnier-Neto et al, 2017).

## Parent Outcomes

### More Positive Parenting Practices

**EHS** parents provided more support for children's language development and learning than control parents. The parents:

- read more frequently to their children;
- taught colors, shapes, and numbers;
- told stories, sang songs; and
- provided more cognitively stimulating books, toys, games, and materials in the home. (Love et al, 2002)

### More Participation in Employment, Education or Job Training

**EHS** parents were more likely to be employed or to participate in education or job training. (Love et al, 2002)

**Abecedarian** mothers were significantly more likely to have pursued education beyond high school. 80% of the mothers who had been adolescents at the time of the Abecedarian's child birth had post high school educational attainment when the child was 15, compared to 28% of control group teen mothers. (Ramey et al, 2000)

**Abecedarian** mothers were more likely to become employed, with an especially striking difference for women who had been adolescent mothers at the time of their first child's birth. 92% of these mothers were employed when the Abecedarian child was 15, compared to 66 % of control group teen mothers. (Ramey et al, 2000).

## Findings from Large Scale Longitudinal Studies

Research investigating impacts of a program on large numbers of children over a long period of time also provides valuable information about program impact.

The Early Head Start Child Welfare Study showed that Early Head Start helps families stay together and be more capable of nurturing their children. This 13-year study examined administrative child welfare records of 1271 EHS randomly assigned children from 7 sites across the nation and found that Early Head Start reduces the risk of:

- child physical and sexual abuse;
- substantiated maltreatment reports;
- child removal from parents into out-of-home placements (Green et al, 2014)

The National Early Head Start evaluation sheds light on the reasons: the program reduced risk factors for physical abuse or neglect. Parents:

- were more emotionally supportive and less detached;
- had less depression;
- experienced less family conflict and less substance abuse (Vogel et al, 2013).

*This Fact Sheet was assembled, from the original research, by Peggy Daly Pizzo, Director, Early Learning Project, Stanford University Graduate School of Education, January 2019.*

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