

How to Take the High/Scope Perry Preschool to Scale

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***CRITICAL ISSUES IN COST EFFECTIVENESS
IN CHILDREN'S FIRST DECADE
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Schooling and Poverty



Amount of Schooling	Poverty Rate
High school dropouts	22%
High school graduates	9%
College graduates	2%

Preschool Program Research



- **Consortium for Longitudinal Studies (1983)** found robust evidence of preschool effects on children's **intellectual performance at school entry and educational placement.**
- High/Scope Perry, Abecedarian, and Chicago Child-Parent Centers studies offer **strong evidence of long-term effects and return on investment.**
- But recent Head Start and state preschool studies find only **modest short-term effects.**

High/Scope Perry Preschool Study: Design



- A **scientific experiment** to find effects of a preschool program for poor young children.
- 123 African American children living in **poverty** and at risk of **school failure**
- **Randomly assigned** at ages 3-4 to a high-quality preschool program or no program.
- **Data collected** annually from 3 through 11 and at 14, 15, 19, 27, and 40.
- **Only 6% of data missing.**

Improved school success



Characteristic	Ages
Intellectual performance (Binet)	4-7
Nonverbal intellectual performance (Leiter)	4-5
Vocabulary and language abilities	4-5
Attitude towards school	15, 19
Parents' attitudes towards child's schooling	15
School achievement	9, 10, 14
Literacy	19, 27

Improved girls' school placement and graduation



Characteristic	Program Group	No-Program Group
Treated for mental impairment	15%	35%
Retained in grade	35%	40%
Did not graduate from regular high school	35%	55%
<i>Girls only:</i>		
Treated for mental impairment	8%	36%
Retained in grade	21%	41%
Did not graduate from regular high school	16%	68%

Improved adult employment and earnings



Characteristic	Age	Program Group	No-Program Group
Employed	27	27%	5%
	40	76%	62%
Mean annual earnings	27	\$12,000	\$10,000
	40	\$20,800	\$15,300
Own home	27	69%	56%
	40	37%	28%
Males raising own children	40	57%	30%

Adult crime cut in half



Characteristic	Program Group	No-Program Group
5 or more arrests	36%	55%
Arrested for violent crime	32%	48%
Arrested for property crime	36%	58%
Arrested for drug crime	14%	34%
Convicted and sentenced	28%	52%

Strong return on investment



Source	Value ^a
<u>Per Participant</u>	
Program cost	-\$15,166
Program cost per year	-\$8,540
Public return ^b	\$195,621
Private return from higher earnings	\$49,191
Societal return	\$244,812
<u>Per Dollar Invested</u>	
Public return	\$12.90
Private return	\$3.24
Societal return	\$16.14

^a Constant 2000 dollars discounted at 3%.

^b 80% from crime savings, rest from education and welfare savings and additional taxes paid.

High/Scope Perry Study Validity



- Strong **internal validity** due to random assignment and low attrition.
- Its **external validity** extends to **reasonably similar** programs.
- The High/Scope Preschool Curriculum Comparison Study found that **High/Scope surpassed scripted direct instruction** in preventing emotional problems and felony arrests.

Carolina Abecedarian Study



- **Random assignment** of 111 infants from poor families to a special program group or a typical child care group.
- **Benefits** in tested performance throughout schooling, educational placement, high school graduation, college enrollment, and fewer teen parents.
- **378% return on investment**

Chicago Child Parent Centers Study



- Study of **1,539 low-income children**, in preschool program or not
- **Benefits** in educational performance and social behavior, better educational placement, high school graduation, and less juvenile delinquency
- **710% return on investment**

Recent Studies



- Have examined the effects of **typical and enhanced** Head Start programs, state preschool programs, and typical child care centers.
- **Only modest effects** on children's literacy and social skills and parents' behavior.
- Long-term effects and return on investment **doubtful.**

1960s vs. 2000s



Condition	1960s	2000s
Poverty	Lack of wealth	Lack of wealth
Welfare	Aid to Families with Dependent Children	Temporary Assistance to Needy Families
Crime rate per 100,000	2,020	4,124

Replication Vs. Application



- Programs **inspired** by the model preschool programs seldom **replicate** them.
- Various practical considerations give **application** priority over **replication**.
- **Examples:**
 - Head Start and state preschool requirements
 - Child care needs
 - Non-poor children

Replicating the High/Scope Perry Program



- **Serve 3- and 4-year-olds whose parents lack schooling and skilled jobs.**
- **16 children and a state-certified preschool teacher and assistant teacher per class.**
- **Staff train in and use High/Scope or other validated child development education model.**
- **Teaching staff engage in frequent visits to children and their parents or caregivers.**

Perry Vs. Head Start



Perry	Head Start
School teacher salaries	Teachers split salaries with family service workers
Weekly home visits	Home visits twice a year
High/Scope curriculum	High/Scope curriculum in 10% of programs
Large short-term effects	Small short-term effects
Long-term effects/return on investment	Long-term effects/return on investment unlikely

Two challenges



- **Policy** – All young children living in low-income families should have access to **preschool programs that have features reasonably similar to the model programs.**
- **Research** – Study the effects of **replications and applications** of the model programs.