

BLAC DETROIT / AUGUST 2011 / THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESCHOOL

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## The Importance of Preschool

How preschool can impact kids for life

TAYLOR IVANA



**I**n order to be promoted to the first grade, a child must first complete kindergarten. But preschool is not a prerequisite for kindergarten. Some parents feel that since it is not required by the state, it is not that important or it doesn't matter at all.

According to the Children's Defense Fund, a Washington, D.C.-based child advocacy organization, students who attend high quality preschools are more likely to go to college, have higher earnings, be in better health, have stable relationships and are less likely to commit crimes or go to prison.

Dr. Brigid Beaubien, who has eight years of experience as a Detroit Public Schools preschool teacher, is now a professor of teacher education and the graduate coordinator of early childhood education at [Eastern Michigan University](#). She says preschool should be a requirement.

"Early childhood education is more than about daycare," says Beaubien. "High quality preschool programs really have to focus on education and developing the different skills of a child—the cognitive, creative, social, emotional and physical—not just taking basic care of them."

Baubien, who also conducts training for home daycare providers in Detroit, says many daycare center owners and directors don't know what it means to be accredited and don't

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know how to develop children's skills.

Susan Madro, a DPS preschool and kindergarten teacher for 20 years, is now the director of the [Merrill-Palmer Skillman Institute Early Childhood Education Center at Wayne State University](#). She says if parents choose a daycare center, they should make sure that their child will be educated while in attendance.

"Children don't need to be just watching [television] or playing aimlessly. They need to have activities planned for them and opportunities for open-ended investigation," says Madro.

"When they have those opportunities, they really flourish."

The HighScope Perry Preschool Study was conducted from 1962 to 1967 with 123 low-income, Black children in Ypsilanti ages 3 and 4. The children were divided into two groups: one with a high quality preschool program and the other without. About 97 percent of the study participants were interviewed at age 40.

The study shows that children in the preschool program were more successful throughout their lives. While 77 percent of those who attended preschool graduated from high school, only 60 percent of the no-preschool group did so. Study participants who attended preschool generally earned more money and had committed significantly fewer crimes.

Children who have high parental involvement and constantly learn at home with the support of parents are likely to have the same success as children who attend preschool.

Dr. Patricia Griffin, an assistant professor of education and the coordinator for the child development and early childhood education programs at [Marygrove College](#), says providing both parental involvement and preschool, is best, but at least one is necessary for a child to succeed.

"Young children living in poverty in the city of Detroit are likely in a single parent family. And that parent, that is caring for the children is likely stretched to [his or her] limit and doesn't have the time, opportunity or the financial backing to buy the kinds of materials that will be supportive in the home," says Griffin.

"Preschool experiences can step in and, if they are high quality experiences, they can give children a lot of opportunities to interact in literacy rich environments in which they experience reading books, having opportunities to write, to draw, to express themselves, tell stories and reenact stories."

High quality preschool prepares children to excel. According to the Children's Defense Fund, investing in high quality early childhood care and development programs, especially for the most disadvantaged children, should be a priority for communities, municipalities and society at large.

POSTED BY LINDA G

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This is an excellent article on educating children in their preschool years. Whether they go to preschool or not, there are so many skills and so much knowledge children need prior

to going to school. There are plenty of affordable materials to help children learn ABCs and 123s right in the grocery or drug stores. Parents need to make sure their children are first priority. It is a small thing to give them that sure foundation they need to become success adults.

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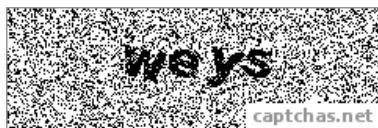
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