

# The Evidence Base for the T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education And Compensation Helps) Early Childhood® Scholarship Program

In 2011, 61% of children ages 0-6, not yet in kindergarten, attended a preschool or early education setting on a regular basis in the United States.<sup>1</sup> In Florida, the percentage is even greater with 77% of eligible four-year-olds served in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Program alone.<sup>2</sup> Given the large number of children served in these programs, there has been growing attention to the quality of the early care and education services that children receive. Research conducted over the past 30 years has consistently shown that the quality of children's early care and education is related to their cognitive and social development and has the potential to affect their language and math skills, relationships with peers, third grade reading level proficiency, and academic success later in life.<sup>3 4</sup>

## Teacher Outcomes of the Program

Among the primary factors associated with high-quality early learning experiences are the education, compensation, and retention of teachers.<sup>5 6 7 8 9</sup> Well-trained and fairly-paid teachers maintain nurturing and consistent relationships with the children in their classrooms and guide them through successful transitions into elementary school. It is precisely the factors of education, compensation, and retention that the T.E.A.C.H. program was created to address. Each year, the T.E.A.C.H. Florida program staff evaluate the effectiveness of the program by analyzing data related to these factors.

## 2015-16 T.E.A.C.H. Data In Florida\*

Teacher Outcomes	After one completed scholarship contract	After two completed scholarship contracts	After three completed scholarship contracts
Increased Education	14 credit hours	27 credit hours	40 credit hours
Increased Compensation	9%	18%	26%
Reduced Turnover+	4%	3%	2%

*\*Average outcomes for all Associate and Bachelor Degree participants in 2015-16.*

*+Compared with a national turnover rate of 30% - 40%.*

**The evidence is conclusive that T.E.A.C.H. helps teachers increase their level of education and compensation. As a result, they become experienced teachers and remain with their employer for longer periods of time.**

## Children's Outcomes as a Function of Teacher Outcomes

Just as higher quality classrooms are linked to better-educated and fairly-compensated teachers who remain in their classrooms, **so too is there a strong link between classroom quality and child outcomes.** Research demonstrates that higher-qualified teachers with specialized early childhood training create better learning environments for young children resulting in better child outcomes.<sup>10</sup>



Consider these findings from a well-constructed study conducted by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill<sup>3</sup>:

- **High-quality early care and education is an important element in achieving the national goal of having all children ready for school.** Findings show that the quality of children's experiences in early care and education programs affects their development while they are in those programs as well as their readiness for school. Children who attended higher quality programs performed better on measures of both cognitive skills (e.g., math and language abilities) and social skills (e.g., interactions with peers, problem behaviors) in those programs and through the transition into school.
- **High-quality early care and education continues to positively predict children's performance well into their school careers.** Longitudinal analysis of children's performance indicated that the quality of early care and education experienced by children before they entered school continued to affect their development into the elementary school years. Higher quality was related to basic cognitive skills (language and math) and children's behavioral skills in the classroom (cognitive/attention skills, sociability, problem behaviors, and peer relations), both of which are important factors in children's ability to take advantage of the opportunities available in school. Higher quality early care and education also correlated with children reading on grade level by the third grade.
- **Children who have been traditionally been at risk of not doing well in school are affected more by the quality of their early care and education experiences than other children.** For some outcomes (math skills and problem behaviors), children whose mothers had lower levels of education – children who often are at risk of not doing well in school – were more sensitive to the negative effects of poor quality early care and education and received more benefits from high-quality programs. Moreover, for the children who attended community programs, the influences of quality early care and education were sustained through second grade.

- **The quality of early care and education practices is related to children’s cognitive development, while the closeness of the teacher-child relationship influences children’s social development through the early school years.** Children who attended programs with higher quality classroom practices had better cognitive development (language and math skills) through early elementary school. Children who had closer relationships with their teachers had better classroom behavior and social skills (cognitive/attention skills and sociability, problem behaviors, and peer relations) through early elementary school.

Countless other studies support these findings and make it clear that working with young children is a profession that requires knowledge of the ways in which children grow and develop as well as the skills to interact effectively with children and parents. **Teachers with knowledge of child development are better able to provide sound programs for young children based on a scientific understanding of how children learn, resulting in better outcomes for children.**<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Laughlin, L. (2013). Who’s minding the kids? Child care arrangements: Spring, 2011. U.S. Census Bureau. Downloaded on January 31, 2017 from: <https://www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/p70-135.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Florida Office of Early Learning (2015). VPK Fact Sheet for Families. Downloaded on January 31, 2017 from: <http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/sites/www/Uploads/files/Oel%20Resources/Publications/2015%20VPK%20Fact%20Sheet%20Families.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Campbell, F.A., Ramey, C.T., Pungello, E., Sparling, J., & Miller-Johnson, S. (2002). Early childhood education: Young adult outcomes from the Abecedarian Project. *Applied Developmental Science*, 6(1), 42-57.

<sup>4</sup> Peisner-Feinberg, E.S., Burchinal, M.R., Clifford, R.M., Culkin, J., Howes, C., Kagan, S.L., Yazejian, N., Byler, P. & Rustici, J. (1999) The children of the Cost, Quality, & Outcomes Study go to school: Technical report. Chapel Hill, NC: Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, UNC-Chapel Hill.

<sup>5</sup> Helburn, S.W. (Ed.) (1995). *Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers: Technical report*. Denver: Department of Economics, Center for Research in Economic and Social Policy, University of Colorado at Denver.

<sup>6</sup> Howes, C., Smith, E., & Galinsky, E. (1995). *The Florida Child Care Quality Improvement Study: Interim Report*. New York: Families and Work Institute.

<sup>7</sup> Phillips, D., Mekos, D., Scarr, S., McCartney, K., & Abbott-Shium, M. (2001). Within and beyond the classroom door: Assessing quality in child care centers. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 15(4): 475-496.

<sup>8</sup> Whitebook, M., Howes, C., & Phillips, D. (1998). *Worthy Work, Unlivable Wages: The National Child Care Staffing Study, 1988-1997*. Washington, DC: Center for the Child Care Workforce.

<sup>9</sup> Manning, M., Garvis, S., Fleming, C. & Wong, G. (2017). The relationship between teacher qualification and the quality of the early childhood education and care environment. *Campbell Systematic Review* 2017:1.

<sup>10</sup> Whitebook, M. (2003). *Early Education Quality: Higher Teacher Qualifications for Better Learning Environments: A Review of Literature*. Berkley, CA: Institute of Industrial Relations

<sup>11</sup> Barnett, W.S. (2003). Better teachers, better preschools: Student achievement linked to teacher qualifications. *Preschool Policy Matters* (2). New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Childhood Research.