



## A Quality Preschool Experience Sets a Solid Foundation for Elementary School

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A multi-year longitudinal study has shown the benefits quality preschool has on students as they matriculate through elementary school. The Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) recently released their study results which showed that students who attended an On My Way Pre-K preschool outperformed their peers in elementary school.

On My Way Pre-K is a program that provides vouchers to low-income parents to ensure they can send their four-year-old child(ren) to a quality preschool school. FSSA deems a preschool to be high quality if the preschool has achieved level three or four on the Path to QUALITY which is Indiana's child care rating system.

Specifically, the study showed that students who attended an On My Way Pre-K preschool outperformed their peers through at least third grade, and this was measured by standardized test scores in English and math.

Currently, the compulsory attendance age in Indiana is seven. This study may bolster the argument to lower the compulsory attendance age. Additionally, the study emphasizes the impact of early education. Over the years, the state academic standards have become more rigorous, and more students are struggling. Instead of being reactive, maybe the answer is to look back to early childhood education and be proactive.

There are arguments about letting children be children and allowing them to play. However, can't children play and also learn? Isn't it worth it to at least consider the possibility of ensuring all preschools in Indiana is at least a level three or four? Although this study is focused on low-income children, high-quality preschool can benefit all children.