

Evaluation of North Carolina's Smart Start and NC Pre-K Programs: Follow-Up Through Eighth Grade

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Highlights:

- Investments by the state of North Carolina in NC Pre-K have produced long-term positive impacts on targeted children that last through at least the end of middle school.
- There is no evidence these positive outcomes “fade out” in any of those grades.
- The positive impacts of participation in NC Pre-K include:
 - Improved reading skills.
 - Improved math skills.
- Participation in NC Pre-K also reduced the probability of:
 - Grade retention among students in grade eight.
 - Being a grade repeater at least one time between grades three and eight.
 - Being placed into special education services in grades 6-8.
- The largest impact is on children from less well-educated, more economically disadvantaged, and African-American families.
- The more funding a county has for NC Pre-K, the better the outcomes for children as they get older.
- Given the high costs of special education to the state, investments in NC Pre-K generate clear benefits in the form of reduced expenditures on special education.