



Community Preventive Services Task Force Recommendation

The Community Preventive Services Task Force recommends center-based early childhood education programs to improve educational outcomes that are associated with long-term health and social- and health-related outcomes.

Facts about Early Child Development

Experiences in the first years of life are extremely important for a child's healthy development and lifelong learning.¹ The stresses associated with poverty may slow developmental processes in young children.²

Early learning opportunities create a critical foundation for children's academic success, health, and general well-being.

What are Center-Based Early Childhood Education Programs?

Center-based early childhood education programs aim to improve the cognitive or social development of children ages 3 or 4 years. Programs must include an educational component that addresses one or more of the following: literacy, numeracy, cognitive development, socio-emotional development, and motor skills.

Children may be enrolled before the age of 3. Programs may offer additional components including recreation, meals, health care, parental supports, and social services. Many early childhood education programs target children from low-income families.

Major Findings

Center-based early childhood education programs increase scores on standardized achievement tests and the likelihood of high school graduation. They are also associated with decreases in crime rates and teen birth rates.

When provided to low-income or racial and ethnic minority communities, early childhood education programs are likely to reduce educational achievement gaps, improve the health of these student populations, and promote health equity.

Learn More

Summary of Evidence and Task Force Finding

www.thecommunityguide.org/healthequity/education/centerbasedprograms.html

Full-Day Kindergarten Boosts Kids' Health Prospects

www.thecommunityguide.org/news/2014/fulldaykindergarten.html

CDC, Office of Minority Health & Health Equity

www.cdc.gov/minorityhealth/OMHHE.html

The Community Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) is an independent, nonfederal, unpaid body of public health and prevention experts. It is congressionally mandated to identify community preventive programs, services, and policies that save American lives and dollars, increase longevity, and improve quality of life. The Community Guide is a collection of all the evidence-based findings and recommendations of this Task Force. Find more information at www.thecommunityguide.org.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides administrative, research, and technical support for the Community Preventive Services Task Force.

¹Healthy People 2020. Early and middle childhood. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Available from <http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020>.

²Shonkoff, J. Philips, D. From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development. Washington, DC: National Academy Press. 2000.