

Letter to the Editor, New York Post

Editor: Head Start has been and remains an invaluable investment in at-risk children, despite assertions made in a recent opinion in your paper (Insert title and date).

True, some studies have shown mixed student progress in the few years immediately following graduation from Head Start. But longer-term, longitudinal research all points to one common fact: Head Start alumni are more likely to stay in school, more likely to graduate from college, and more likely to get a job as adults.

The study referred to in the op-ed was conducted more than 5 years ago and therefore doesn't account for a host of significant reforms put in place since then to improve Head Start outcomes. Also, when we know that nearly 20 percent of the children in this study who were supposed to be receiving Head Start services never received them, and nearly 20 percent of the control group did, even though that group was not intended to be in Head Start, that complicates the task of drawing clear cut conclusions.

We know investments in early childhood learning reap dividends for all of society later in life. We need to keep fine tuning programs from what we learn to increase these cost benefits, not abandon the strategy.