



**August 2012**

## **Survey**

### **[Head Start Research and Innovation Survey](#)**

Those who've taken the survey so far have shared amazing and unique program innovations! Changing the conversation about Head Start is about showing the country what we do so well and how Head Start is defined by the myriad ways programs adapt to meet the needs of vulnerable populations in every community. Tell us what you do that's amazing! [Take the survey now!](#)

## **News**

### **[Speaking Up for Children](#)**

*by T. Berry Brazelton for the Huffington Post*

Based on more than sixty years of experience as a pediatrician working with infants and young children, Dr. Brazelton addresses the critical role Head Start and Early Head Start play in children's life success and the desperate need for advocacy in these difficult times. His call to action is heartfelt and powerful.

### **[UA study shows electronic books can help kids learn to read — if digital extras don't distract](#)**

*by John Higgins for the Beacon Journal*

This local coverage of the Akron Ready Steps study done at the University of Akron offers a clear summary of the study's findings about children using e-books. Implemented in Head Start classrooms, the study found that e-books held children's attention longer, but contributed more to learning when the e-books had features that focused on text and didn't distract with games or animations unrelated to the story.

## **Resources**

### **[What do babies think?](#)**

*"What's it like to be a baby? It's like being in love in Paris for the first time after you've had three double espressos." (Alison Gopnik)*

In this eighteen-minute video, Alison Gopnik, a professor of psychology at the University of California at Berkeley, describes research about how by the age of 18 months, babies begin to

understand what goes on in other people's minds. She also explores how learning during infancy and childhood is based on the sort of experimentation scientists do, and how critical playing is to learning.

### **[Preparing Young Latino Children for School Success](#)**

*from the National Council of La Raza*

These reports, released last week by NCLR, offer case studies and policy recommendations for best practices in Professional Development, Student Assessments, Language Instruction and Family Engagement for those working with young Latino children and ELL children and their families.

#### **Statistics and Data Sources**

Numerous reports have come out recently that document the condition of children in the United States and forecast the effects for them if Federal spending is cut dramatically in the coming months. Here are major data sources where you can learn more about your state or region:

- **[America's Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well-Being](#)** - the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics has published its report on the well-being of children and families nationally.
- **[KIDS COUNT Data Book](#)** - This annual publication from the Annie E. Casey Foundation offers revealing numbers on child poverty and educational opportunity in each state.
- **[Under Threat: Sequestration's Impact on Nondefense Jobs and Services](#)** - This report from Senator Harkin's office enumerates potential cuts to Head Start slots and jobs in each state.

#### **Research**

### **[Investing in Health: the Long-term Impact of Head Start on Smoking](#)**

*by Kathryn Anderson, James Foster & David Frisvold for Economic Inquiry*

The authors set out to examine a potential non-academic benefit of Head Start attendance: changes in smoking behaviors. They compared the adult smoking behaviors of individuals who attended Head Start in the 1970s with their siblings who did not attend. The study found that Head Start reduced the likelihood of smoking as an adult by 19.4%. Based on current costs for smoking in terms of health effects and lost productivity, savings from reductions in smoking alone pay back between 36-141% of the funds invested in each Head Start child.

The cause of the reduction in smoking is unclear, but the authors propose a few possible

explanations. First, educational gains correlate with lower rates of smoking; when Head Start children achieve greater academic success, these may come with associated gains in health. Second, non-cognitive benefits of Head Start, such as increased self-esteem and the ability to resist peer pressure, may have enabled Head Start graduates to resist social pressures to engage in smoking. This research is further proof of the many ways Head Start attendance improves child outcomes, and is useful for rebutting the idea that academic fade out means Head Start's benefits are gone.

**Evaluating Lasting Effects of Full-day Prekindergarten Program on School Readiness, Academic Performance and Special Education Services**

*by Huafang Zhao & Shahpar Modarresi for the Office of Shared Accountability of Montgomery County Public Schools*

To determine the value of increasing Head Start pre-K services from half-day to full-day, Montgomery County public schools (MCPS) compared outcomes for children who attended full-day Head Start pre-K with children who attended (1) half-day Head Start pre-K, (2) half-day MCPS pre-K or (3) no pre-K. Children in the various settings were propensity-matched to ensure differences could be attributed to their pre-K experience rather than demographic factors.

Results showed that full-day Head Start students were more likely to reach reading benchmarks by the end of kindergarten, especially when compared to children with no pre-K experience. Findings were especially strong for African-American students. In addition, compared to children without MCPS pre-K experiences, Head Start full-day students required 62% fewer hours per week of special education services. This dramatic savings makes a strong case for the power of Head Start services both to reduce costs to school systems and to improve children's ability to succeed in the early years of their education.

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Do you know of other recent research that may be of interest to the Head Start field? Do you have other questions, comments or concerns? E-mail Emmalie Dropkin ([edropkin@nhsa.org](mailto:edropkin@nhsa.org)).