

The Preliminary Impact of New York City's Universal Pre-K Program in 200 Words

[Health Equity](#)

Date Posted:

Apr 21, 2017

Image



A [recent study](#) examining the impact of New York City's universal pre-kindergarten program on child health caught my eye. It showed that opening doors to these high-quality programs led to early identification and treatment of health issues. Previously, components of success in pre-k included programs such as teaching quality and social-emotional supports, but this is one of the first studies highlighting child health's role in school readiness. For example, it found that children with hearing or vision impairments did not struggle in class because of missed opportunities for screening and early identification.

Furthermore, the researchers demonstrated, using two separate sets of data, that by breaking down the silos between education and health care systems, both sectors saw parallel improvements in young children. This makes sense as these systems play important roles in the lives of young children, and are viewed as trusted sources of information by families.

While preliminary, these results remind us of the positive outcomes, such as early identification and treatment of health concerns and sensory impairments, that can result from collaboration between educators and physicians through simple strategies such as greater sharing of information and shared responsibility for supporting families. As Philadelphia and other cities build pre-k programs, it will be important for them to break down barriers and build stronger links between early childhood education and health care.



[Marsha Gerdes](#)

PhD

Senior Psychologist (retired)

Related Content

[Improving Screening and Referral for Developmental Issues among Young Children in Urban Primary Care Sites](#)