

## LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR LITERACY & LEARNING

### THE VITAL ROLE OF HIGH-QUALITY CURRICULUM FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Quality early childhood education (ECE) is essential for lifelong learning. It shapes about 85% of a child's brain by age 3, establishing key foundations for future academic, social, and emotional success. More than just literacy and numeracy, a high-quality ECE curriculum enhances cognitive development, social skills, and emotional resilience, contributing significantly to overall well-being and economic growth.



#### 1. Cognitive Development

Early childhood curriculum, coupled with professional development training, lays the cornerstone for cognitive growth, enhancing language, literacy, and numeracy skills. Studies[1] show that research-based curriculum combined with teacher training significantly enhances a child's kindergarten readiness, providing a solid foundation for lifelong learning. High-quality curriculum in early childhood education offers engaging activities and tailored experiences that foster a child's ability to learn, think critically, and solve problems. For instance, Putnam County Schools in Florida report that Frog Street's curriculum aligns with Florida's VPK standards and Title I funding requirements, facilitating common planning and pacing across classrooms, which are key for continuity and equity. [2]

[1] Appendix B: Kindergarten Readiness

[2] Appendix A: Frog Street Customer Testimonials | Putnam County Schools

#### 2. Social and Emotional Skills

Quality ECE curriculum and training instill crucial social and emotional skills vital for holistic development. Programs with quality ECE curriculum foster empathy, cooperation, and emotional regulation. This helps nurture the growth of resilient individuals capable of forming healthy relationships and maintaining emotional well-being. Developmentally appropriate curriculum provides interactive experiences in nurturing environments, vital for emotional well-being. Frog Street's customers note that the Frog Street Continuum of curriculum offers accessible tools for emotional regulation. [3]

[3] Appendix A: Frog Street Customer Testimonials |

**“STUDY BY JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY FINDS USAGE OF FROG STREET PRE-K CURRICULUM ASSOCIATED WITH POSITIVE GAINS AND KINDERGARTEN READINESS”**

### 3. Long-term Educational Success

A study by Johns Hopkins University finds usage of Frog Street Pre-K Curriculum associated with positive gains and kindergarten readiness.[4] Additional research consistently shows that children in high-quality ECE programs, with trained teachers, have increased graduation rates, higher educational achievements, and improved employment prospects. Central to this success is a research-driven early childhood education curriculum, serving as a scaffold for future learning and nurturing critical skills and knowledge.

[4] Appendix D: Long-Term Success

### 4. Health and Well-Being

Introducing young learners to healthy habits and lifestyle choices from an early age, a well-crafted early childhood curriculum lays the groundwork for reducing health disparities and enhancing overall well-being. Estimates indicate that low adult literacy skills contribute to \$230 billion per year in healthcare costs[5]. Emphasizing health in early education benefits individual children and contributes to building healthier communities, reducing healthcare costs, and easing the strain on public infrastructure[6] and taxpayer-funded programs.

[5] [Manatee Literary Council](#)

[6] Appendix C: Reducing Strain on Infrastructure

### 5. Reduced Inequality

Quality early childhood programs, driven by well-designed, developmentally appropriate curriculum, provide a level playing field for children from all socioeconomic backgrounds. These curriculums offer tailored and adaptable approaches, ensuring no child is left behind in their learning journey. By fostering an inclusive environment, they act as a bridge, mitigating disparities and providing equitable opportunities for all children to thrive and succeed.[7]

[7] Appendix E: Reduced Inequality

### 6. Economic Impact

According to the World Literacy Foundation's "Economic Cost and Social Impact of Illiteracy," illiteracy costs the United States approximately \$300 billion per year[8] in non-productivity, unemployment, crime, and lost tax revenue. Investing in early childhood programs that utilize high-quality ECE curriculum yields significant economic benefits. Beyond supporting a skilled workforce, these programs mitigate long-term societal costs associated with remedial education, health issues, and social services. They provide immediate and long-term dividends, impacting children, families, communities, and society.

[8] [World Literacy Foundation](#)

***Early childhood programs sow the seeds for a stronger, more equitable, and prosperous future, benefiting individuals and society as a whole. Furthermore, investing in high-quality early childhood education curriculum and professional development is more than a step toward academic readiness; it's a catalyst for transformative change that will be felt for generations. The dividends of such investments are not just seen in academic achievements but resonate across all aspects of life, creating a more robust and thriving community.***

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Frog Street Customer Testimonials Lutheran Services Florida

1. "Support for self-regulation was already built into the Frog Street curriculum where it made it a lot easier for our teachers to access the tools they needed to assist them with helping children with their social emotional needs, but also it was like a one-stop-shop kind of thing. Before, we didn't we have everything in terms of materials and supplies and things for our teachers."

## Putnam County Schools

1. "All of our schools are Title 1 schools... When we were looking at the curriculum, we were looking for something that included all areas of our Florida VPK standards (social-emotional, math, literacy, science, etc). Frog Street does a great job of including all those areas."
2. "A huge benefit was that all teachers were using the same curriculum. It allowed for common planning and pacing among all classrooms."

## Appendix B: Kindergarten Readiness

There are several studies that support the claim that early childhood curriculum impacts a child's readiness for kindergarten success.

General Evidence: Research has shown that early childhood curriculum is associated with positive developmental outcomes in children. These outcomes have been confirmed through rigorous studies, including randomized controlled trials and regression discontinuity designs, encompassing diverse groups of children and teachers. ([source](#))

These studies indicate that while there are positive associations between early childhood curriculums and kindergarten readiness, the outcomes can vary depending on the specific curriculum and its implementation.

## Appendix C: Reducing Strain on Infrastructure

Emphasizing health and well-being in early education is beneficial for reducing public infrastructure strain. Key points supported by the CDC ([source](#)) include:

1. Promotes Healthy Development: Early childhood is a critical period for promoting health and preventing diseases, which later translates into less strain on healthcare systems.
2. Reduces Future Onset of Diseases: Effective early education can act as a protective factor against future diseases and disabilities, contributing to health equity and reducing long-term healthcare costs.
3. Improves Development and Outcomes: Interventions have shown improvements in academic achievement, cognitive development, self-regulation, and social-emotional development, which correlate to healthier lifestyles and reduced dependency on healthcare in adulthood.
4. Cost-Effectiveness: Early childhood education programs have demonstrated a high return on investment, showing long-term savings in healthcare and other costs.

## Appendix D: Long-Term Success

A study conducted by Johns Hopkins University ([source](#)) evaluating the efficacy of the Frog Street Pre-K curriculum with students in Texas observed a positive association between Frog Street and student learning gains across a number domains. Top three findings include 1) Frog Street Pre-K Students Experience Positive Learning Gains, 2) Frog Street Establishes a Foundation for Kindergarten Readiness, 3) Access to Frog Street Curriculum Impacts Learning Gains for Spanish Speaking Students.

The study sample included approximately 78,000 students in Pre-K across 316 districts who were instructed using Frog Street Pre-K curriculum as their primary curriculum for the 2021-2022 school year. This sample of students was compared to students utilizing a different Pre-K curriculum. Study results were determined from a comparison of student performance scores in the reading, writing, language, health, and mathematics domains via the CIRCLE assessment from fall 2021 to spring 2022 across both sets of students.

Another study conducted by the School Effectiveness and Inequality Initiative at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) ([source](#)) supports the claim regarding the long-term educational success of children participating in high-quality early childhood education (ECE) programs. This study investigated the impact of Boston Public Schools' public preschool program on more than 4,000 preschool applicants between 1997 and 2003. It found significant long-term improvements in the academic and behavioral outcomes of children who attended the preschool program. Specifically, compared to those who did not attend, preschool attendees were more likely to:

- Graduate high school
- Take the SAT
- Enroll in college on time
- Enroll in college at all

Additionally, these children had fewer school suspensions in high school and were less likely to experience juvenile incarceration. The research suggested that preschool leads to long-term educational attainment gains through behavioral improvements and that these benefits are consistent across various demographic groups. This study contributes to the growing body of evidence showing the short- and long-term benefits of high-quality early childhood education, particularly for children from low-income families, in developing crucial social, emotional, and academic skills.

## Appendix E: Reduced Inequality

The World Bank's report on "Quality Early Learning: Nurturing Children's Potential" ([source](#)) supports the claim that quality early childhood education (ECE) programs can help reduce inequality. Key findings and statistics from the report include:

1. Capacity for Learning in Early Years: The report highlights that young children have a significant capacity to learn, which must be deliberately nurtured. High-quality ECE can develop children's cognitive and socio-emotional skills, executive function, and motivation, crucial for success in school and beyond. Investing in ECE lays the foundation for building human capital necessary for individual well-being and more equitable societies.
2. Impact of Low-Quality ECE on Learning Poverty: Approximately 53% of children in low- and middle-income countries are considered "learning poor," meaning they cannot read and understand a short text by age 10. This figure is predicted to rise above 70% due to the COVID-19 pandemic, underscoring the importance of quality ECE in combating learning poverty and ensuring equitable learning opportunities.
3. Importance of Quality and Accessibility in ECE: The World Bank stresses that expanding access to ECE must be coupled with efforts to improve its quality. Prioritizing investments that enhance learning, such as improving the ECE workforce's capacity, adopting age-appropriate pedagogy, and ensuring safe and stimulating learning environments, can effectively address learning disparities. Moreover, systems delivering quality early learning at scale are developed intentionally over time, with investments in both school and home environments, especially for the most disadvantaged children.

These points underscore the importance of high-quality ECE programs in providing equitable opportunities for all children, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, to thrive and succeed.