

WHY IS QUALITY CHILD CARE IMPORTANT?

Offering child care services that support children's development

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HIGHLIGHTS

- *High quality child care programs have been shown to have positive effects on children's development that can last even into adulthood.*
- *The effects of high quality care are especially profound for low-income or otherwise at-risk children.*

Quality child care programs are those that:

- Provide children warm, nurturing interactions with appropriately trained and compensated teachers focusing on school readiness, child development, and health/nutrition.
- Have enough teachers in each classroom so that they have the capacity to interact meaningfully with each child.
- Offer a developmentally appropriate curriculum.
- Engage families in their child's schooling experience.
- Provide nutritious meals and physical activities suitable for the child's age.¹

Babies and toddlers need quality interactions and environments in order to build strong brains, which lays the foundation for all future learning. Higher quality birth-through-3 programs have been shown to improve outcomes for children in the following ways:

- Healthier cognitive development;
- Higher pre-reading and pre-writing skills;
- Lower rates of special education placements later in school;
- Higher high school graduation rates; and
- Lower rates of externalizing behaviors among youth, such as aggression, disobedience, and cheating.²

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Quality early childhood education (ECE) programs from birth through age 3 are also important to help children build the foundation and begin to develop skills for three critical executive functions: working memory, impulse control, and cognitive flexibility.³

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NOTES:

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CHILDREN AT RISK is a Texas based research and advocacy organization. Our mission is to serve as a catalyst for change to improve the quality of life for children through strategic research, public policy analysis, education, collaboration, and advocacy.

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