

Educare

Problem

Attending high-quality childcare and preschool can have lasting positive impact on children who might otherwise face stumbling blocks on the path to school readiness, academic success, and a productive life. But for many families in the U.S., high-quality care is too expensive,¹ has too long a wait-list, or is difficult to find.² National data shows that millions of low-income birth to five year olds are not being served in any center-based childcare, nursery, or preschool, quality notwithstanding.³ Improving the affordability and accessibility of high-quality care opens the door to a lifetime of potential for these vulnerable children.

Solution

Increase access to high-quality early education programs tailored to meet the needs of disadvantaged children in the neighborhoods where their families live and/or work.

High Impact Opportunity

Educare™ provides full-day, full-year schooling for low-income children from birth to age five. The first Educare school opened in Chicago in 2000, and 19 more Educare sites have since opened in high-need communities across the U.S. Each school serves 140 – 200 children.

How it Works

Unlike many childcare or preschool programs that operate in rented or shared space, Educare builds new school buildings to be able to serve large numbers of children (including infants and toddlers) and to provide them with classroom space tailored to their needs. Once operational, each Educare school implements research-based instruction to ensure kindergarten readiness and set their students up for success throughout their lives. The approach emphasizes:

- Ongoing data collection to assess children’s progress, combined with use of those data to inform classroom instruction and guide discussion with families
- Intensive engagement to promote positive parent-child relationships, with trained staff providing individually tailored support to families

- Emphasis on high-quality classroom instruction, with three teachers per classroom and ongoing teacher coaching
- Continuity of care allowing children to form stable relationships essential to development, with each child maintaining the same teacher from birth to age three and then from age three to age five

Although there is some local variation, all Educare schools adhere to a basic set of **core practices** to ensure quality. Schools also receive assistance and training through the national Educare network for ongoing improvements of their own local programs and services.



Image provided by Educare

What's the Impact?

Evidence shows that Educare participation can narrow, or in some cases close, the achievement gap for disadvantaged children in measures of vocabulary, school readiness, and social emotional skills. In the long term, early success in these areas has been linked to lower rates of high school dropout, behavior issues, crime, and unemployment, among other outcomes.

Short-term impacts: Both at specific locations and averaged over multiple Educare sites, children who participate in Educare show improvements in vocabulary, school readiness, and social emotional skills:

- On average, Educare graduates score close to the national mean of 100 (95 for English speakers and 82.5 for English language learners) on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT),⁴ an early literacy measure that assesses a student's vocabulary and is used commonly as a rough assessment of IQ.^{5,6} Scoring close to the national mean is notable, given Educare's high-risk target population: studies show that children with multiple risk factors can score as low as 59.7.⁷

- More years of Educare attendance are associated with better kindergarten readiness and vocabulary skills.⁸

Mid-term impacts:

- In Chicago, Educare graduates sustain vocabulary, math, and social emotional skills into third grade, and perform better in kindergarten and beyond than their non-participating peers.⁹ 67% of Educare Chicago students met or exceeded third grade state reading standards, versus 57% of Chicago public school students overall. And 74% of Educare students met or exceeded third grade standards in math versus 69% of public school students overall.¹⁰
- In Omaha, children in grades three to seven who had received at least two years of Educare performed 25 points (29%) better on standardized reading tests than a comparison group of low-income children in their school district (110 versus 85 points). They also outperformed the state proficiency standard of 86 points.¹¹

Long-term impacts: Because Educare is a relatively new program, evidence of long-term impact is still unknown. However, data collection efforts are underway, including randomized trials.¹² In the absence of data specific to Educare, donors can still make an educated guess about long-term impact by comparing results of similar, high-quality programs that have been the subject of robust research. The Abecedarian project, for example, also provided full-day, full-year schooling to a set of disadvantaged birth to five year olds in the 1970s in order to study the impact of such care on life outcomes. The findings of this project indicated that participating children did better in school, earned more money, and had healthier behaviors than peers who did not participate, repaying the initial investment many times over.¹³

Additional Social Impact

- **Greater and sustained family involvement in children’s schooling.** Preliminary results from the Chicago follow-up study found that teachers rated two-thirds of Educare parents as being either equally or more involved in their children’s schooling than other parents.
- **Increased quality standards in teaching and education outcomes by training early learning professionals in teaching methods and practices.** For example, Educare of Denver shares a campus with the Clayton Institute and Training Center, and serves as a demonstration site for teacher education, leadership development, parent engagement, and program evaluation to improve the quality of early childhood services throughout Colorado.
- **Increased philanthropic, governmental and corporate investment in early learning.** Educare has been actively involved in a range of successful advocacy efforts to increase or protect public funding for early childhood programming. In Oklahoma, for example, Educare Tulsa inspired the creation of the Oklahoma Early Childhood Program (OECF), an innovative funding

mechanism to provide more services to at-risk infants, toddlers and their families throughout the state. Consistent with Educare's model of private dollars maximizing the impact of public spending, OECP is funded with \$10 million of public funds and \$15 million of private funds.

What Does it Cost to Implement?

One-time construction costs for an Educare facility range from \$8 to \$12 million, depending on the location and other factors. Educare is funded through public-private partnerships, with philanthropic dollars covering most of the construction costs and public funding of various types (the largest portion being from Head Start) covering approximately 80% of ongoing operational costs.

Operating costs for an Educare facility range from \$2.8 to \$3.4 million per year. The average per-child operating philanthropic cost ranges from \$4,000 (for one year of participation) to about \$20,000 (for five full years of participation).¹⁴ There is some variation in average per-child costs due to cost-of-living differences across sites, the number of individual schools operated under one organizational umbrella, as well as the size of the infant program at each school (infant care has lower staff ratios and is much more costly than preschool classes).¹⁵

Cost per Impact

An additional child can receive Educare for a philanthropic cost of between \$4,000 and \$20,000, depending on how many years that child attends the program.

Evidence indicates that the longer a child participates in Educare, the stronger the outcomes will be.

Representative impacts:

- **Short-term:** Educare students score at or very close to the national mean on tests of school readiness, vocabulary, and social/emotional skills. Educare graduates are scoring on these measures as if they had no risk factors.
- **Mid-term:** Educare students surpass their peers with fewer risk factors on district and state level standardized tests for reading and math.
- **Long-term:** Based on evidence from similar high-quality early childhood programs, Educare students may see better health, an increase in school achievement and income, and a decrease in unemployment.

For more information on the Center's approach to calculating cost per impact, click [here](#).

Take Action

Use this [online mapping tool](#) to locate current Educare programs and their local implementing partners, or contact Educare's national partners: the [Ounce of Prevention Fund](#) and the [Buffett Early Childhood Fund](#). Click [here](#) for suggestions of other programs that provide kids with great places to learn.

SNAPSHOT

CORE PRACTICE: Expanding access to high quality learning environments for children and their families by establishing full-day, full-year schools in areas where vulnerable families live and/or work.

TARGETED BENEFICIARIES: Low income children from birth to five and their families.

IMPACT ACHIEVED: Vocabulary and school readiness measures close to national averages; learning gains appear to be sustained into early elementary and middle school.

COST/IMPACT OR COST-BENEFIT: For a per-child philanthropic investment of \$20,000, a child receiving five years of Educare scores at or very close to the national mean on tests of school readiness, vocabulary, and social/emotional skills, despite their risk factors.

¹ The average annual cost of full-time care for an infant in center-based care ranges from \$4,863 in *Mississippi* to \$16,430 in *Massachusetts*; and For a 4-year-old, the average annual cost for center-based care ranges from \$4,312 in *Mississippi* to \$12,355 in *New York*.

Child Care Aware (2013): *Parents and the High Cost of Childcare*. Retrieved 2/08/14 at: <http://usa.childcareaware.org/sites/default/files/Cost%20of%20Care%202013%20110613.pdf>

² A 2007 study by the National Institute of Child Health Development found that only 10% of day care providers provided “high quality care.” A 2006 study by the Government Accountability Office found that many low-income parents with limited English skills were also unaware that they were eligible for childcare subsidies.

The NICHD Study of Early Childcare and Youth Development (2007). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved 2/08/14 from https://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/documents/seccyd_06.pdf

U.S. Government Accountability Office (2006). *Child Care and Early Childhood Education: More Information Sharing and Program Review by HHS Could Enhance Access for Limited English Families*. Retrieved 2/08/14 from <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-06-807>

³ Kids Count Data Base. Original sources: U.S. Census and American Community Survey for 2009-2001. Estimate is for children living below 200% of federal poverty line.

Zero to Three. Expanding Access to Early Head Start. 2012. Retrieved 2/14/14 at: <http://www.zerotothree.org/public-policy/pdf/expanding-access-to-ehs-paper.pdf>

⁴ PPVT national mean is 100. English-speaking *Educare* children score a 95 on average and English language learners score 82.5 on average. Frank Porter Graham (FPG) Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina : Educare Implementation Study Findings – August 2012. Retrieved 2/08/14 from: <http://eln.fpg.unc.edu/sites/eln.fpg.unc.edu/files/FPG-Demonstrating-Results-August-2012-Final.pdf>

⁵ FPG Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill using data from 12 *Educare* schools

⁶ Barnett, W.S., & Lamy, C.E. (n.d.). Estimated impacts of number of years of preschool attendance on vocabulary, literacy and math skills at kindergarten entry. *NIEER Working Paper*. Retrieved Feb. 8, 2014, from <http://nieer.org/resources/research/EstimatedImpacts.pdf>

⁷ A recent Memphis study, for example, found that while children with no risk factors (such as living in poverty, or in a house where the first language is not English) scored close to the national mean on the PPVT (100), those with three or four risk factors scored well below (75 and 59.7, respectively).

Burchinal, M., Vandergrift, N., Pianta, R., & Mashburn, A. (2010). Threshold analysis of association between child care quality and child outcomes for low-income children in preschool programs. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 25(2), 166-176. Retrieved 2/08/14 from: <http://www.urbanchildinstitute.org/key-initiatives/data-book/2013/education>

⁸ Frank Porter Graham (FPG) Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina : Educare Implementation Study Findings – August 2012. Retrieved 2/08/14 from: <http://eln.fpg.unc.edu/sites/eln.fpg.unc.edu/files/FPG-Demonstrating-Results-August-2012-Final.pdf>

⁹ Magnuson, K.A., Ruhm, C. & Waldfogel, J. (2007). The persistence of preschool effects: Do subsequent classroom experiences matter? *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 22, 18-38.

¹⁰ Ounce of Prevention, slides on Chicago follow-up study. Retrieved 2/09/14 at <http://www.ounceofprevention.org/research/pdfs/Followup-Study-Presentation-20130206.pdf>.

¹¹ St. Clair, L. (n.d.) Munroe-Meyer Institute, University of Nebraska Medical Center. Educare of Omaha Information Brief: Educare of Omaha School Age Follow-up Study. Unpublished evaluation provided by Educare. (Educare of Omaha average=111; school district average for children eligible for free and reduced lunch=85). They also outperformed the state average of 100.

¹² Ibid. *Educare* and FPG have launched a longitudinal random control study to examine program effectiveness and impact by assessing child development and parent-child interactions of 239 infants and their families from birth to age three.

¹³ Karoly, L.A., Kilburn, MR, Cannon, J.S. (2005). *Early childhood interventions: Proven Results, Future Promise*. RAND.

¹⁴ The average per-child (all-in, full-day, year-round) operating cost for Educare is about \$20,000, ranging from \$17,000 to \$25,000. Because 80% of this cost (around \$16,000) is covered through government funding streams (Head Start, Early Head Start, child care subsidies and preschool funding), however, the additional per-child philanthropic contribution to Educare's model is around \$4,000 for a single year, or \$20,000 for all five. This contribution can be considered Educare's quality add-on to a "regular" Head Start/Early Head start program.

¹⁵ For comparison purposes: The average annual cost of full-time care for an infant in center-based care ranges from \$4,863 in *Mississippi* to \$16,430 in *Massachusetts*; and For a 4-year-old, the average annual cost for center-based care ranges from \$4,312 in *Mississippi* to \$12,355 in *New York*. These are averages, however, and also do not include costs for the kind of advocacy and training work done by Educare in addition to direct services to children and families.

Child Care Aware (2013): *Parents and the High Cost of Childcare*. Retrieved 2/08/14 at :<http://usa.childcareaware.org/sites/default/files/Cost%20of%20Care%202013%20110613.pdf>



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