The cognitive, economic, and social consequences of "Universal Pre-Kindergarten" initiatives

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Abstract

Legislative initiatives in many states have mandated the universalization of pre-kindergarten programs for all children, regardless of their achievement, ethnicity, or families’ income. Because of this, there is a need to examine the economic, political, and psychological aspects of universalization. This study is analyzing several large state and national data bases to address these aspects. Of particular importance is the question of whether pre-kindergarten programs can be justified for middle class children. Do they gain cognitively or socially from such programs? Can the money devoted to their programs be used more effectively to increase the positive effects of these programs for children from poor families?