

Early Head Start Pre-K to 12 Education

Benefit-cost estimates updated December 2017. Literature review updated April 2012.

Current estimates replace old estimates. Numbers will change over time as a result of model inputs and monetization methods.

The WSIPP benefit-cost analysis examines, on an apples-to-apples basis, the monetary value of programs or policies to determine whether the benefits from the program exceed its costs. WSIPP's research approach to identifying evidence-based programs and policies has three main steps. First, we determine "what works" (and what does not work) to improve outcomes using a statistical technique called meta-analysis. Second, we calculate whether the benefits of a program exceed its costs. Third, we estimate the risk of investing in a program by testing the sensitivity of our results. For more detail on our methods, see our [Technical Documentation](#).

Program Description: Early Head Start is a federally-funded program for low-income pregnant women and families with infants or toddlers that aims to enhance children's development and health and strengthen families. Families can receive services until the children are three years old. Early Head Start accounts for 10% of the Head Start budget; program providers determine the specific services offered following Head Start guidelines.

Benefit-Cost Summary Statistics Per Participant

Benefits to:

Taxpayers	\$2,176	Benefit to cost ratio	(\$0.13)
Participants	\$713	Benefits minus costs	(\$12,617)
Others	\$357	Chance the program will produce	
Indirect	(\$4,740)	benefits greater than the costs	25 %
Total benefits	(\$1,494)		
Net program cost	(\$11,123)		
Benefits minus cost	(\$12,617)		

The estimates shown are present value, life cycle benefits and costs. All dollars are expressed in the base year chosen for this analysis (2016). The chance the benefits exceed the costs are derived from a Monte Carlo risk analysis. The details on this, as well as the economic discount rates and other relevant parameters are described in our [Technical Documentation](#).

Detailed Monetary Benefit Estimates Per Participant

Benefits from changes to: ¹	Benefits to:				
	Participants	Taxpayers	Others ²	Indirect ³	Total
Crime	\$0	\$4	\$9	\$2	\$14
Labor market earnings associated with test scores	\$575	\$261	\$250	\$0	\$1,086
K-12 grade repetition	\$0	\$37	\$0	\$19	\$56
K-12 special education	\$0	\$599	\$0	\$301	\$900
Health care associated with disruptive behavior disorder	\$2	\$6	\$8	\$3	\$20
Costs of higher education	(\$11)	(\$13)	(\$4)	(\$7)	(\$35)
Subtotals	\$566	\$894	\$262	\$317	\$2,040
From secondary participant					
Labor market earnings associated with major depression	\$531	\$241	\$0	\$6	\$778
Health care associated with major depression	\$25	\$77	\$95	\$38	\$234
Public assistance	(\$409)	\$963	\$0	\$483	\$1,037
Subtotals	\$147	\$1,281	\$95	\$527	\$2,050
Adjustment for deadweight cost of program	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$5,585)	(\$5,585)
Totals	\$713	\$2,176	\$357	(\$4,740)	(\$1,494)

¹In addition to the outcomes measured in the meta-analysis table, WSIPP measures benefits and costs estimated from other outcomes associated with those reported in the evaluation literature. For example, empirical research demonstrates that high school graduation leads to reduced crime. These associated measures provide a more complete picture of the detailed costs and benefits of the program.

²"Others" includes benefits to people other than taxpayers and participants. Depending on the program, it could include reductions in crime victimization, the economic benefits from a more educated workforce, and the benefits from employer-paid health insurance.

³"Indirect benefits" includes estimates of the net changes in the value of a statistical life and net changes in the deadweight costs of taxation.

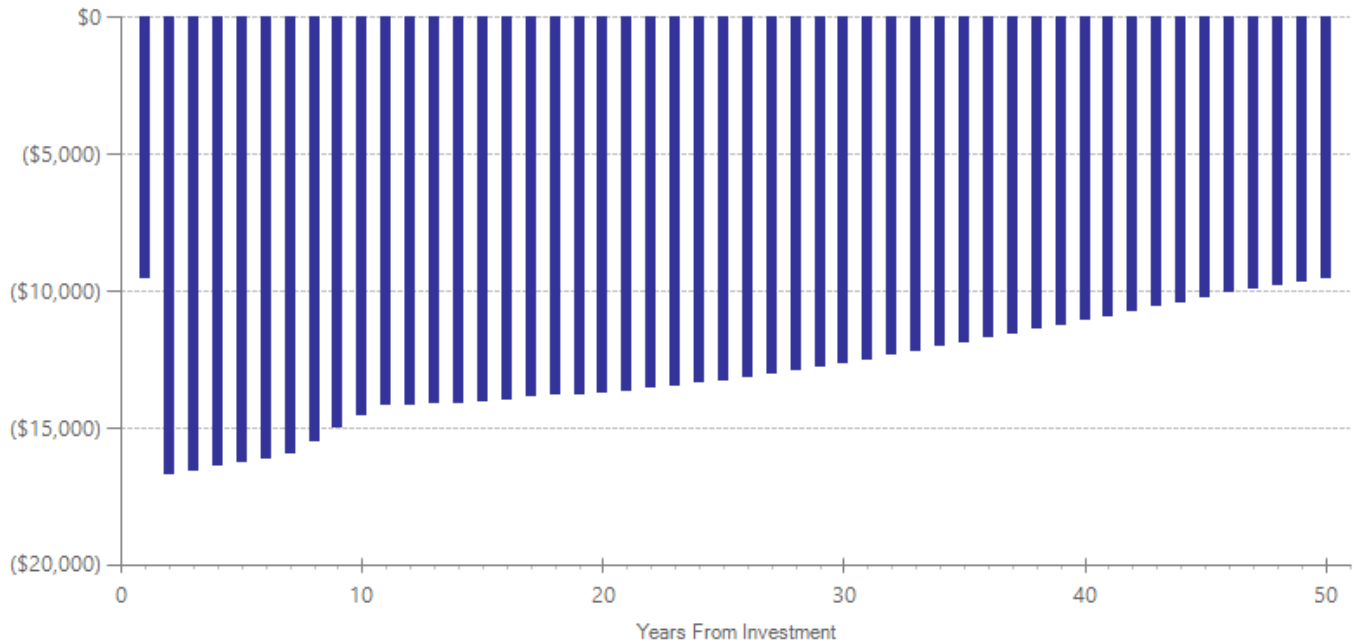
Detailed Annual Cost Estimates Per Participant

	Annual cost	Year dollars	Summary	
Program costs	\$7,600	2010	Present value of net program costs (in 2016 dollars)	(\$11,123)
Comparison costs	\$1,679	2010	Cost range (+ or -)	10 %

Families who participate in Early Head Start typically participate for 1.75 years. Per-family costs from the US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, FY 2010.

The figures shown are estimates of the costs to implement programs in Washington. The comparison group costs reflect either no treatment or treatment as usual, depending on how effect sizes were calculated in the meta-analysis. The cost range reported above reflects potential variation or uncertainty in the cost estimate; more detail can be found in our [Technical Documentation](#).

Detailed Annual Cost Estimates Per Participant



The graph above illustrates the estimated cumulative net benefits per-participant for the first fifty years beyond the initial investment in the program. We present these cash flows in non-discounted dollars to simplify the “break-even” point from a budgeting perspective. If the dollars are negative (bars below \$0 line), the cumulative benefits do not outweigh the cost of the program up to that point in time. The program breaks even when the dollars reach \$0. At this point, the total benefits to participants, taxpayers, and others, are equal to the cost of the program. If the dollars are above \$0, the benefits of the program exceed the initial investment.

Meta-Analysis of Program Effects

Outcomes measured	Primary or secondary participant	No. of effect sizes	Treatment N	Adjusted effect sizes and standard errors used in the benefit-cost analysis						Unadjusted effect size (random effects model)	
				First time ES is estimated			Second time ES is estimated			ES	p-value
				ES	SE	Age	ES	SE	Age		
Crime	Primary	1	842	0.000	0.050	10	0.000	0.050	20	0.000	1.000
Externalizing behavior symptoms	Primary	1	842	-0.038	0.050	10	-0.018	0.027	13	-0.038	0.447
Internalizing symptoms	Primary	1	842	-0.052	0.050	10	-0.038	0.042	12	-0.052	0.296
K-12 grade repetition	Primary	1	842	-0.041	0.088	10	-0.041	0.088	17	-0.041	0.637
K-12 special education	Primary	1	842	-0.093	0.081	10	-0.093	0.081	17	-0.093	0.252
Test scores	Primary	1	842	0.011	0.052	10	0.007	0.057	17	0.011	0.827
Employment ^{^^}	Secondary	1	842	0.000	0.050	29	0.000	0.050	39	0.000	1.000
Major depressive disorder	Secondary	1	842	-0.045	0.050	29	-0.023	0.274	31	-0.045	0.364
Public assistance	Secondary	1	842	-0.073	0.060	29	-0.073	0.060	39	-0.073	0.224
Substance misuse [^]	Secondary	1	842	-0.008	0.112	29	-0.008	0.112	39	-0.008	0.940
Years of education	Secondary	1	842	0.000	0.050	29	0.000	0.050	39	0.000	1.000

[^]WSIPP’s benefit-cost model does not monetize this outcome.

^{^^}WSIPP does not include this outcome when conducting benefit-cost analysis for this program.

Meta-analysis is a statistical method to combine the results from separate studies on a program, policy, or topic in order to estimate its effect on an outcome. WSIPP systematically evaluates all credible evaluations we can locate on each topic. The outcomes measured are the types of program impacts that were measured in the research literature (for example, crime or educational attainment). Treatment N represents the total number of individuals or units in the treatment group across the included studies.

An effect size (ES) is a standard metric that summarizes the degree to which a program or policy affects a measured outcome. If the effect size is positive, the outcome increases. If the effect size is negative, the outcome decreases.

Adjusted effect sizes are used to calculate the benefits from our benefit cost model. WSIPP may adjust effect sizes based on methodological characteristics of the study. For example, we may adjust effect sizes when a study has a weak research design or when the program developer is involved in the research. The magnitude of these adjustments varies depending on the topic area.

WSIPP may also adjust the second ES measurement. Research shows the magnitude of some effect sizes decrease over time. For those effect sizes, we estimate outcome-based adjustments which we apply between the first time ES is estimated and the second time ES is estimated. We also report the unadjusted effect size to show the effect sizes before any adjustments have been made. More details about these adjustments can be found in our [Technical Documentation](#).

Citations Used in the Meta-Analysis

- Roggman, L.A., Boyce, L.K., & Cook, G.A. (2009). Keeping kids on track: Impacts of a parenting-focused early head start program on attachment security and cognitive development. *Early Education and Development, 20*(6), 920-941.
- Vogel, C.A., Xue, Y., Moiduddin, E.M., Carlson, B.L., & Kisker, E. (2010). *Early Head Start children in grade 5: Long-term follow-up of the Early Head Start research and evaluation study sample* (Final Report) (Document No. PR10-61). Princeton, NJ: Mathematica Policy Research.

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