

# The impact of two years of preschool

## Two Years are Better Than One

High-quality preschool programs are a proven strategy for strengthening the cognitive and social and emotional development of young children. Research shows that two years has more impact than one year.

Key findings from Australian and international research:

- Two years of preschool is beneficial for many children
- Children experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage benefit the most
- The quality of programs matters as low and medium quality programs do not achieve short or long-term impacts
- Preschool improves cognitive, social and emotional outcomes

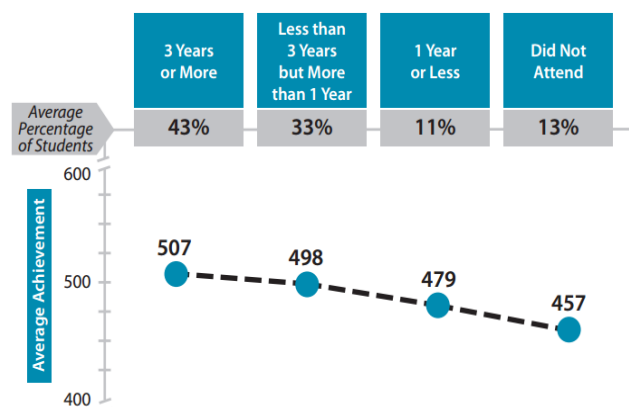
There are many studies that show the long-lasting positive impact of two years of preschool for all children, regardless of socio-economic status.

A landmark UK study showed that students who attended 2-3 years of preschool had better outcomes at the start and the end of school.

- At the start of school, these children had better development in language, pre-reading, early number concepts, independence, concentration and sociability.
- At the end of school, they achieved higher total final exam scores, better grades in English and in maths, and took more final year exams. They also had better social behaviours and self-regulation (Taggart 2015).

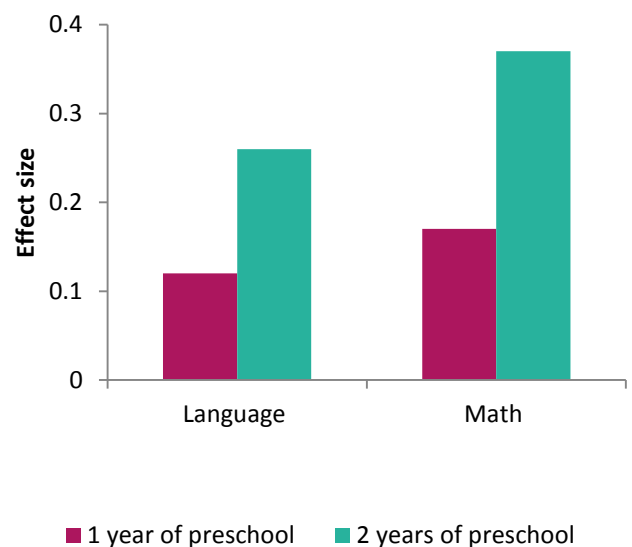
Analysis of international test results (PISA, PIRLS and TIMSS) show that children with at least two years of preschool achieve much higher scores at age 15 than those who attend no preschool or only one year.

International average of students attending pre-primary education and achievement in mathematics, TIMSS 2011 (Mullis et al, 2012)



The Abbott Pre-K program in New Jersey found much higher impacts on academic achievement at Grades 4 and 5 for the children who attended preschool from age 3.

Abbott Pre-K impact on language and maths at Grade 4 (Barnett et al 2013)

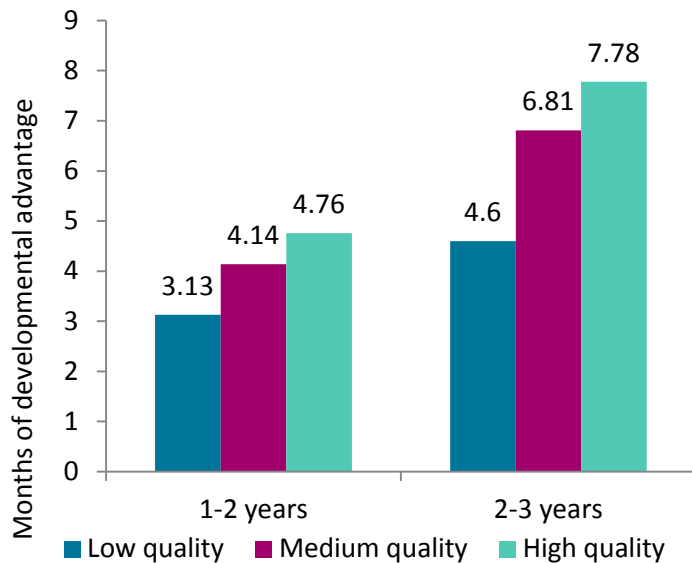


## Quality is key

Preschool programs improve children's development and long-term achievement and wellbeing only when they are high quality.

UK research shows that children who attended at least two years of high quality preschool had a nearly 8 month developmental advantage, compared to a 3 month advantage of one year of low quality preschool.

Development advantage (in months) for duration and quality of preschool on literacy at school entry (home as comparison) (Taggart et al. 2015, p. 9)



Similarly, the positive impact of preschool on key social and emotional skills was only sustained over time if it was high quality.

Influence of the quality of preschool on positive social behaviours at age 14 (home as comparison) (Taggart et al. 2015, p. 12)

