

Supporting early child education does pay off

Re July 24 article, "Grads getting F in preparedness": While it is discouraging that many incoming university students need tutoring in basic math, reading and writing, many New York businesses are experiencing a similar problem — an influx of new workers deficient not only in the "hard skills" of math, science and reading, but also in the so-called "soft skills" — communication, collaboration and critical thinking.

Clearly, the earlier our children can acquire these skills, the better their chances to succeed in school and later in the work force. Research compiled by the business leaders group America's Edge shows that children who participate in high-quality early education programs enter school with a much stronger foundation in these skills.

A long-term study of a high-quality preschool in Michigan found participating kids were up to 44 percent more likely to graduate from high school and were able to earn up to 36 percent more as adults than their peers who were left out.

Similar research of children enrolled in Chicago's Child-Parent Centers found participants were more than 30 percent more likely to hold a job considered semi-skilled or higher — and more likely to have attended a four-year college — than children who did not participate.

The bottom line: Supporting high-quality early care and education is good for our children and our economy.

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