

Closing the Achievement Gap

The achievement gap between white and minority students has gained much public attention. In Worcester the percentage of minority students who do not graduate from High School continues to rise. The problem begins long before students enter High School. In Worcester we see a continuing decline in MCAS scores of third grade students. Many initiatives have been developed to address the educational disparities. Research indicates that a high quality preschool experience can lessen the impact of low maternal education and childhood poverty. At risk children armed with early childhood education can enter school equal to their peers. Preschool can prepare them to succeed in school and in life.

High quality preschool is expensive. Many working families cannot pay for the cost of care. In Worcester the annual cost of center-based early childhood education ranges from \$12,375 for infant care to \$9,100 for preschool. Historically the cost to families is kept artificially low through low teacher salaries. We know that well educated staff makes a difference. Low staff turnover which provides a stable environment for children is critical. As new standards require higher teacher education standards we must develop strategies to provide competitive compensation.

Early brain development research is clear. We must give all children the chance to achieve in school and in life. The ultimate savings in special education, juvenile justice and future welfare dependency are a benefit of a community's investment in early childhood education. More importantly, however, all children deserve a fair start that will lead to happy and successful lives.



Research supports using computers as learning tools in preschool. Students can develop long-term memory, small and large motor skills, verbal skills and hand-eye coordination in addition to familiarity with letters, numbers, words and symbols.

Fast Facts

In 2005, 78% of Worcester third graders did not meet proficiency in Reading. 74% were not proficient in Mathematics.

Worcester's drop-out rate is 7.4% compared to 3.5% state-wide.

26.8% of children under 18 are living in households with incomes below the Federal Poverty Level. (\$20,650.00 for a family of 4)

Public School, Head Start and Center-based programs serve 3,397 children under 6. 601 children remain on a waiting list for subsidized care.

[Research Based Tips for High Achievement Parenting](#)

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[Read more about the impact of higher education on early education.](#)

High quality early childhood education requires a high quality workforce. Research indicates that outcomes for children improve when teachers are adequately compensated and have a bachelor's degree or better. In an effort to improve classroom quality while addressing the needs of centers as they move toward reaccreditation, Edward Street Child Services has convened a group of agencies, colleges, and other community members to develop a community-wide higher education plan. Our goal is to assure that all early childhood educators are afforded the opportunity to achieve their degree. We are working to break down the barriers of cost, time, transportation, childcare, and language so that all can achieve. We owe it to our children. We owe it to our teachers. We owe it to our community.

[Who's Involved](#) To get involved [contact us](#).