

GSRP CHILD OUTCOMES: FINDINGS FROM MICHIGAN'S STATE-FUNDED PRESCHOOLS

Michigan has a long history of investing in preschool education. The internationally recognized HighScope Perry Preschool Study started in Ypsilanti in 1962. At age 40, former preschool participants had higher earnings and lower arrest rates than non-participants. The positive results from this study and many others paved the way for the launch of Michigan School Readiness Program in 1985. This program then became the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP), Michigan's state-funded preschool for four-year-old children with factors that may place them at risk of educational failure. Today, GSRP serves over 35,000 children per year, reaching more than one-third of Michigan's four-year-old children.



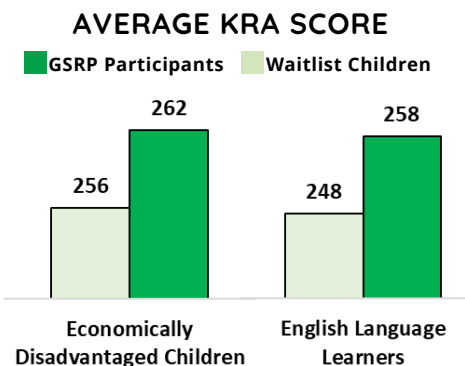
Public investment in preschool is an increasingly popular social policy, based in part on favorable research findings. However, critics have questioned whether public preschool is worth the investment. Some studies have found that academic and behavioral impacts are minimal or fade quickly. The validity of other studies has been challenged because their samples were small or subject to selection bias.

When MSU's Community Evaluation Programs/University Outreach and Engagement won the contract as GSRP state evaluator in 2017, we proposed a series of large-sample and academically rigorous studies to examine the outcomes of GSRP. Long-term effects have yet to emerge because the study just reached its fifth year. However, our study, using data from Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI), has shown positive effects on kindergarten readiness. In addition, aggregated M-STEP data from CEPI consistently show that GSRP participants have better third-grade test scores than non-participants. Furthermore, data from HighScope, the previous GSRP state evaluator, show positive outcomes in high school and beyond.

GSRP graduates are better prepared for kindergarten than their peers

Using Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) data from 19,495 children in 2019–2020, we found that GSRP participation began to close achievement gaps based on socioeconomic status and language status.

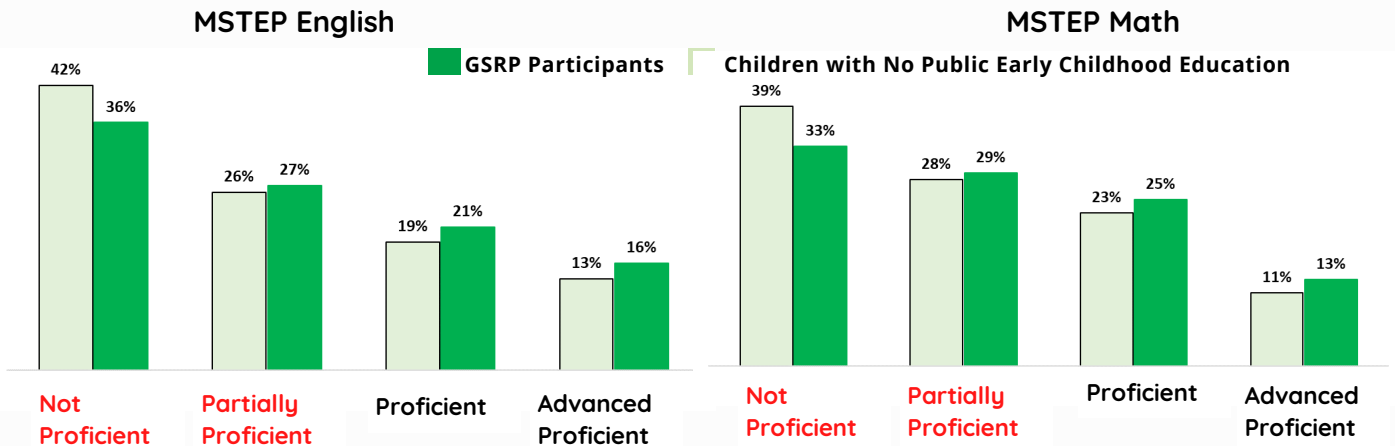
Economically disadvantaged GSRP participants outperformed disadvantaged children who were placed on GSRP waitlists, and their KRA scores came close to those of wealthier kindergarteners. Similarly, GSRP English language learners (ELLs) had significantly better KRA scores than waitlisted ELLs, approaching the scores of English-speaking children.



MSU KRA Brief
<https://bit.ly/3PNL5Yn>

GSRP graduates perform better at third grade

Based on the 2018-2019 summary data stored in CEPI and provided by MDE, GSRP participants demonstrated higher proficiency levels on the state standardized assessment in both English and math than children who did not participate in publicly funded early childhood programs.



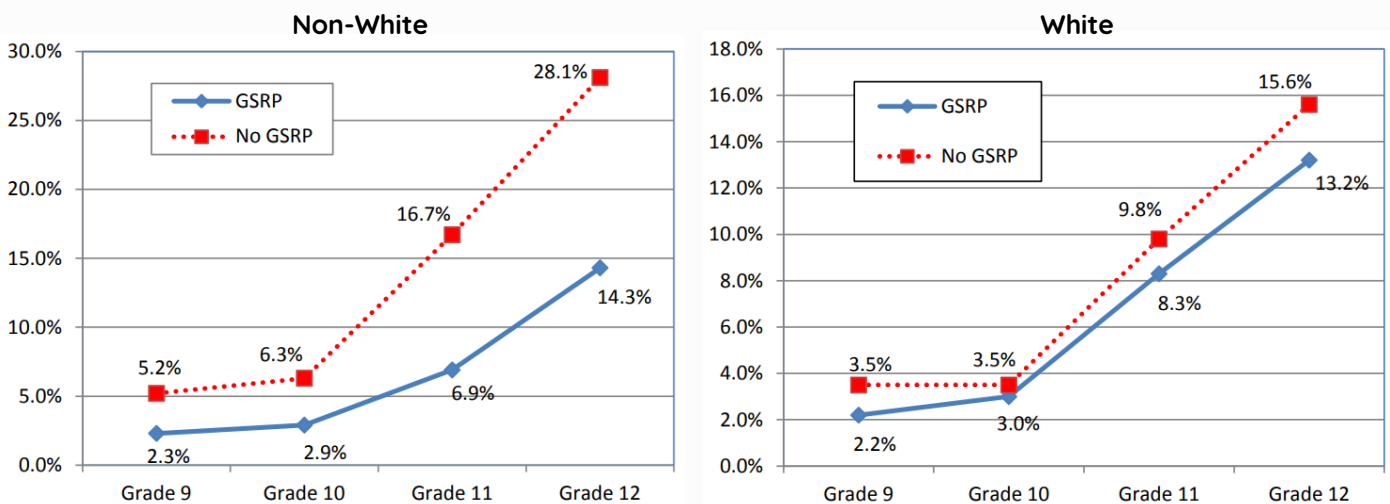
GSRP graduates outperformed peers at high school and beyond

As the previous state evaluator, HighScope followed the 1995-1996 cohort of 338 GSRP children and 257 eligible children who did not participate in GSRP from kindergarten through high school graduation. Their study found that 57% of GSRP participants graduated high school on time, as compared to 43% of non-participants. This difference in on-time graduation rate was greater among non-White than White children. Similar racial gaps were also found in grade retention. Although non-White children were more likely to repeat a grade than White children, GSRP participation had a stronger influence on their high school retention rate than on that of White children.



HighScope Report
<https://bit.ly/3CqR1Bb>

Multiple Grade Retention by Race, GSRP Status and Grade



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