

## Nobel Prize Winner Speaks on the Economic Good Sense of Early Learning

Nobel Prize-winning economics professor **James Heckman** has extensively studied the economic returns to society of investing in early learning. Professor Heckman concludes that the return on investment ranges between 7% and 10% per year over the life of the child. These are significantly higher returns than the 5.8% long-term growth of the stock market.



Professor Heckman has conclusively shown that major economic and social problems in America — crime, teenage pregnancy, high school drop-out rates, adverse health conditions — can be traced to low levels of skill and social ability such as attentiveness, persistence, and impulse control. When social skills are taught at an early age, along with cognitive skills, citizens are more capable and productive well into adulthood. Developing these skills is a major objective of early childhood education programs — and they work.

To reach his conclusions, Professor Heckman studied decades of data from early childhood development programs.

Professor Heckman's analysis of economic return is based primarily on two long-running pilot programs, Perry Preschool and Abecedarian.

In both programs there was a consistent pattern of successful life changes for the participants compared with control group members. Participants:

- scored higher on achievement tests;
- attained higher levels of education;
- required less special education;
- earned higher wages;
- were more likely to own a home;
- were less likely to require social safety net programs; and
- were less likely to be incarcerated.

Heckman states: "Make greater investments in young children to see greater returns in education, health and productivity."