PreK-3rd: Closing Achievement Gaps by 4th Grade

A Strong Start: Positioning Young Black Boys for Educational Success

Washington, DC

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Definition of PreK-3rd

The continuum of learning that spans the traditional boundaries of PreK-kindergarten (learning-based programs children experience before they enter school) and the early grades (K-3).
Why this age range (PreK-3rd)?

• Brain development is at its most robust and particularly sensitive

• 3rd grade = children shift from learning to read to reading to learn
PreK-3rd: Research Base

• Achievement Gaps exist early…and persist

• Evidence points to what works:
  – High quality Preschool is imperative
  – High quality Full-day Kindergarten has tremendous pay-offs
  – High quality early grades fight fade-out
PreK-3rd: Research Base

• Conditions not optimal for young children’s learning:
  – Low Quality (pre-school programs and elementary classrooms)
  – Fragmented Alignment (within ECE, across ECE/K-3, and within K-3)
CPC Achievement Scores

3rd Grade (Age 9)  
106 104 102 100 98 96 94 92 90 88  
Reading  Math

7th Grade (Age 13)  
146 144 142 140 138 136 134 132  
Reading  Math

PreK + K Only
PreK + K only
Extended Intervention

PreK-3rd Education

Primary Goals:

1. Develop strong foundational cognitive skills (literacy/communication and math)
2. Develop social and emotional competence
3. Establish patterns of engagement in school and learning
Horizontal Alignment

0-3 PreK FDK 1st Grade 2nd Grade 3rd Grade

Within Within Within Within Within Within
Horizontal Alignment of the “PreK Part”

Kindergarten

Head Start
Child Care
State-funded PreK
Families
Vertical Alignment
The Difference Between:

- Building Blocks
- Pop-Beads
P-3 Improves Each Grade Level and Aligns Across Grade Levels
PreK-3rd Strategies

• Create collaborative mechanisms
• Ensure administrators are instructional leaders
• Empower teachers to focus on instruction and teamwork
• Align standards, curricula, and assessments
PreK-3rd Strategies

• Establish a student-centered learning environment
• Rely on data to improve instruction and guide reform
• Engage families
• Move children along a high-quality pathway
Kristie Kauerz, Ed.D.
Program Director, PreK-3rd Education
Harvard Graduate School of Education
617.496.9565
kristie_kauerz@harvard.edu