



## Key Quotes

*Nobel Prize-winning University of Chicago Professor James J. Heckman and his colleagues at the Center for the Economics of Human Development evaluate early childhood and other programs that develop skills from birth to early adulthood.*

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“The highest rate of return in early childhood development comes from investing as early as possible, from birth through age five, in disadvantaged families. Starting at age three or four is too little too late, as it fails to recognize that skills beget skills in a complementary and dynamic way. Efforts should focus on the first years for the greatest efficiency and effectiveness. The best investment is in quality early childhood development from birth to five for disadvantaged children and their families.”

*(Statement for the Heckman Equation, December 7 2012)*

“The family into which a child is born plays a powerful role in determining lifetime opportunities. This is hardly news, but it bears repeating: some kids win the lottery at birth, far too many don’t—and most people have a hard time catching up over the rest of their lives. Children raised in disadvantaged environments are not only much less likely to succeed in school or society, but they are also much less likely to be healthy adults. A variety of studies show that factors determined before the end of high school contribute to roughly half of lifetime earnings inequality. This is where our blind spot lies: success nominally attributed to the beneficial effects of education, especially graduating from college, is in truth largely a result of factors determined long before children even enter school.”

*(from “Lifelines for Poor Children,” The New York Times, September 15 2013)*

“Quality early childhood programs for disadvantaged children are not entitlements or bottomless wells of social spending. They are not government boondoggles. The investments we make today in disadvantaged young children promote social mobility, create opportunity, and foster a vibrant, healthy, and inclusive society and economy. Investing in the lives of disadvantaged children is a strategy that appeals to Americans across all economic, social, and partisan lines. It promotes family values. It strengthens the American family by offering voluntary programs that enrich the lives of children and builds in them the skills that create successful lives, while at the same time respecting cultural and religious values. It fosters social inclusion and the productivity of the American workforce, and creates a healthier society for all.”

*(Remarks from the White House Summit on Early Education, December 10 2014)*

“Investments that bolster the parenting capacities of families are the most effective way to promote social mobility and foster equal opportunities for all. They empower children with the capabilities to flourish as dignified and engaged citizens and workers throughout their lives. Such investments provide significant returns to individuals and society, provided that we invest in quality systems throughout the critical years of birth to age five.”

*(Remarks from the 2015 Education Writers Association National Seminar, April 16 2015)*

“Early childhood programs should be evaluated using a full range of skills that enable children to become more productive adults. Many analysts equate program effectiveness with performance on short-term measures of cognition that poorly predict life success. Socioemotional skills—such as attentiveness, impulse control, sociability, and conscientiousness—are primary drivers of achievement, health, and increased social and economic productivity. Unfortunately, these skills often go unmeasured.”

*(from “Early childhood education and social mobility,” Vox EU, January 12 2016)*