CultureCase

Using the arts to help prepare children for school success

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Summary

This study looked at students, teachers, parents and carers in Detroit who were participants in the Wolf Trap's 'Early Learning Through the Arts' programme. This programme included dedicated activities for children and their families, as well as training and encouragement for teachers, artists and caregivers. The study found that the arts programme had positive impacts on students' 'emergent literacy' and their 'social-emotional learning': competencies that are necessary for future school success.

The 424 children in the programme were randomly matched to 406 comparison students

The activities for children in the programme comprised 16 half-hour classroom sessions, two per week for six to eight weeks. This was supplemented by a Family Involvement Workshop with parents and children playing and learning together. The comparison students did not participate in the arts programme but were given the same tests as the arts group students (before and after the intervention). All the children in the study were aged between 3 and 5 and all were participants in the local 'Head Start' programme.

'Emergent literacy' and 'social-emotional learning' are crucial for later success in school

Emergent literacy includes things like a child's ability to read, say and write words, what vocabulary they have at their disposal, and their level of interest and enjoyment of books. Social-emotional learning is the means by which

children approach their own learning, their ability to set goals, stay motivated and balanced, and maintain relationships with others in the learning environment.

Keywords

learning **children** **experiment** **USA** **control group**

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