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## **Human Capital Book Shows How to Sustain Early Childhood Learning Gains**

*Minneapolis:* A pair of leading scholars at the University of Minnesota have organized and integrated best practices for how to sustain gains in children’s learning and well-being achieved by early education and school-age programs.

In a new book, *Sustaining Early Childhood Learning Gains*, editors [Arthur J. Reynolds, PhD](#), a professor in the [Institute of Child Development](#) and [Judy A. Temple, PhD](#), a professor in the [Humphrey School of Public Affairs](#), highlight interventions and practices that promote healthy development in the first decade of life and ways schools, families, communities, and public institutions can lend support. This Cambridge University Press volume is available on-line and summarized at [hcrc.umn.edu](http://hcrc.umn.edu).

Data show that only half of all kindergartners are school ready, and that early learning gains are often lost in subsequent years. “We know that high quality PreK and early education improve school readiness skills and later success” notes Dr. Reynolds, “but ensuring that all programs are effective and families have access to them require strong systems of support. Problems are usually addressed in piecemeal fashion by focusing on one solution without integrating into the larger system of services for all. Alignment between PreK and kindergarten is just one example.”

Reynolds and Temple are co-directors of the University of Minnesota’s [Human Capital Research Collaborative](#), an interdisciplinary center that aims to promote public policies and programs for young people through multidisciplinary research from the prenatal period through early adulthood.

The book describes the contributions of nearly all of the factors that improve gains including quality, dosage and intensity; teacher background and experience; class sizes and curriculum; parent involvement and family services, and school quality. It also describes approaches for scaling and financing these and other elements.

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel comments that ““This research reinforces why we’re taking significant strides to expand early education, which is fundamentally about giving every child in every neighborhood their best chance to succeed. Reynolds and Temple show us that these significant investments in our children will help level the playing field, further close the achievement gap, and build stronger communities for generations to come.”

As noted by Arne Duncan, former U.S. Secretary of Education, “this book has it all, offers a plethora of recommendations that will strengthen practices, and clearly shows that good early childhood policy and effective school reform go hand in hand.”

Samuel J. Meisels, Founding Executive Director of the Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska, further notes: “this volume focuses on one of the most crucial issues facing us today: how to build upon and sustain the gains from early intervention. The editors and authors are clear that we need a multi-year commitment to continuity and quality. The work presented here provides powerful

justification for this comprehensive investment.”

One of the chapters describes the PreK to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Child-Parent Center (CPC) Program, which through small classes, engaged learning in the classroom, parent engagement, and professional development promotes educational success. CPC Implementation in Chicago and Saint Paul Public School Districts not only increased children’s school readiness skills at the end of preschool compared to the usual programs, but gains are sustained through at least the end of kindergarten. Chicago’s CPCs have shown sustained gains to midlife and a 10 dollar return per dollar invested.

Other chapters by leading experts include Barbara Bowman (Erikson Institute), Craig Ramey and Sharon Ramey (Virginia Tech), Greg Duncan (University of California-Irvine), Deborah Stipek (Stanford University), Larry Schweinhart (HighScope Research Foundation), Barbara Wasik (Temple University), and Frances Campbell (University of North Carolina), among others. They address the substantial roles of timing and duration of services, teacher qualifications, curriculum, alignment across grades and professional development, and lessons from exemplary programs such as Perry and the CPCs as well as Head Start and state PreK in Oklahoma, New Jersey, and Michigan. Given that most current programs and practices do not have the key elements of effectiveness for sustained gains, increased investments that mirror those found in the best programs and practices are needed.

Kate Wolford, President of the McKnight Foundation notes that early learning is an “investment in our shared future. Much has been written about the importance of early learning for brain development, but this book provides important research and insights into how to sustain those early gains through the K-3 years and beyond.”

This is reinforced by Rip Rapson, CEO and President of the Kresge Foundation: The research is ripe with insights and directives gleaned from years of investments, programming, and evaluations. This is well-timed and well-aimed as public and private investments in early childhood seek to spur an increasingly greater impact.”

In the Foreword, Karen Hanson, Executive Vice President and Provost of the University of Minnesota explains that the focus on “increasing and sustaining early learning gains is a crucial topic”, and the book “capitalizes on the extraordinary breadth, as well as the quality, of our research capacity, in order to address the world’s grand challenges.”

In addition to making program-level recommendations, the volume emphasizes the importance of local, state and national systems to support early childhood education.

As Reynolds and Temple explain, “to fully support the continuum of learning during all of early childhood, high priority should be given to increases in program dosage, duration, and quality; teacher development; school and instructional quality; family support and parenting; and P–3 continuity. These foci are consistent with key principles of effectiveness and are supported by the evidence from the most successful programs.”

Further information:

Excerpt:

[https://assets.cambridge.org/97811084/25926/excerpt/9781108425926\\_excerpt.pdf](https://assets.cambridge.org/97811084/25926/excerpt/9781108425926_excerpt.pdf)

Cambridge University Press website ([www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)) and volume identifier (<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108349352>)

Human Capital Research Collaborative (<http://hcrc.umn.edu>)

Resources for Educators in Sustaining Early Learning Gains

<http://cpcp3.org>

<http://naeyc.org/resources>

<http://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/early/>

Arthur Reynolds ([ajr@umn.edu](mailto:ajr@umn.edu)) and Judy Temple ([jtemple@umn.edu](mailto:jtemple@umn.edu)).

Twitter: HCRC (@humancapitalrc)

Phone: 651-230-7957; 612-625-4321

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