

PRESCHOOL INHIBITS CHILDREN'S SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

by Roy Hanson, Jr.

January 2006

New Preschool Studies

Stanford University and the University of California (UC) at Berkeley published a report of a research study* dated November 4, 2005, on the effects of preschool on children's development. This study compares the math skills, reading, and social development of young children who attended preschool to that of young children who remained at home prior to kindergarten.

Their research study reported, "We find that attendance in preschool centers, even for short periods of time each week, hinders the rate at which young children develop social skills and display the motivation to engage classroom tasks, as reported by their kindergarten teachers." This lack of development of social skills involved three specific areas: "children's externalizing behaviors (such as, aggression, bullying, acting up), interpersonal skills (such as, sharing and cooperation), and self control in engaging classroom tasks."

According to a November 1, 2005 UC Berkeley Press Release, "Most surprising ... is that the social skills of white, middle-class children suffer - in terms of cooperation, sharing and engagement in classroom tasks - after attending preschool centers for more than six hours a day, compared to similar children who remain at home with a parent prior to starting school."

The study indicates that there is some increase in math and reading skills among children who attend preschool as compared to their non-schooled counterparts. However, previous longitudinal studies have shown that this observed increase disappears within a few years.

Significantly, this study also found that **children who attended preschool** at least 15 hours a week **displayed more negative social behaviors** as compared with children who stay at home.

In June 2003, Sarah Friedman, who works on the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development's (NICHD) ongoing study of Early Childcare and Youth Development, made a report to the National Institute of Health's Child Care Board. Ms. Friedman reported, "The results indicated that even though the ratings of the majority of the children's problem behaviors are within the expected range for children of the same ages, the **more time children had spent in nonmaternal child care across the first 4.5 years of life, the more adults reported conflict with the child** and such problem behaviors as aggression, disobedience, and assertiveness." [emphasis added]

The November 1st UC Berkeley Press Release cited a more recent NICHD research study report, issued the week of October 24, 2005, which reaffirms "...that the negative effect of **long hours in child care** (not limited to preschool) **is slowing children's social development** well into third grade." [emphasis added]

The UC Berkeley's Press Release and the Stanford/Berkeley report itself indicate that extreme caution should be in order before pushing for universal preschool. Ignoring its problems, universal preschool is being aggressively pushed by Hollywood's liberal left to be on California's June 2006 primary ballot as an initiative.

It doesn't require any imagination to see where universal preschool can take us. All one has to do is look at recent history and current events. In pre-war Germany, the Nazi fascist/socialist government incrementally took over control of the education of children eventually from infancy, in assemblyline fashion. Some 70 years later, total government control of children is about to come to Great Britain, which continues to drift toward more European socialism.

According to the *Cox News Service* (11/20/05), "under a new government proposal, British children will start training for school almost as soon as they leave the womb. Indeed, the initiative would require every nursery and every caregiver to teach newborn babies and toddlers an *Early Years Foundation Stage* curriculum beginning in 2008. National inspectors would be required to verify that children are developing in four distinct curriculum headings." Penalties for failure to meet government-imposed standards for babies and toddlers have yet to be determined.

According to the *The Times* of London, "Childminders and nurseries will be under a legal duty to teach the *Early Years Foundation Stage* to children from birth until the age of 3. They will be taught mathematics, reading and writing, according to Beverley Hughes, the Children's Minister." The *Early Years Foundation Stage* curriculum is currently being used with children from age 3. The Times reported Ms. Hughes as saying that this program was a bold move and would provide "a coherent framework that defines progression from nought (i.e. birth) to five."

Ms. Hughes further stated, "It brings, for the first time, the provision of integrated early years education and care into the mainstream of the modern welfare state."

If England will follow pre-war Germany's example, will we follow England's? Universal preschool is an extremely troubling proposal and a dangerous incremental step in this same direction. It is bad for the children. It is bad for families. And it is bad for our state and nation.

Please read the paper, *Institutionalized Early Childhood Education - Background and Issues*. A new (12-05), updated version is available at www.childandfamilyprotection.org. This paper will provide you with a summary of studies that provide a clearer understanding of the dangers and concerns with institutionalized early childhood education along with numerous references. Permission is given to download and print these documents for distribution.

We encourage everyone to become familiar with some of the important facts and concerns about institutionalized preschool. We all want to be able to vote wisely and to discuss issues like this with our friends and neighbors from an informed point of view. Some may want to use this information to write "letters to the editor." It is in the best interest of all parents to educate people we know, who will be asked to vote this coming June on the California initiative to implement universal preschool.

* The title of the Stanford, UC Berkeley research study is *How Much is Too Much? - The Influence of Preschool Centers on Children's Development Nationwide*.

Permission is given to duplicate this document unaltered and in its entirety. Please include the source and complete mailing address.