

MAKING THE CASE FOR P-3
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Overview

Just as P-16 reformers look to improve the high school to college transition by ensuring multiple pathways for students, the PreK-3 approach supports the notion that children will enter the public school system from different pathways. PreK-3 begins with early learning programs, policies and priorities for children starting at birth and integrates and aligns them with those of the early elementary grades.

PREK-3 Benefits Everyone

This paper outlines the benefits of a PreK-3 approach for everyone, including:

1. Infants and toddlers – PreK-3 brings explicit attention to the needs of young children including infant/toddler child care, parent support and education, health protection and early intervention services.
2. 3-5 year olds – PreK-3 emphasizes the importance of high-quality early learning programs in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten. This emphasis is based on research supporting short-term benefits of high academic achievement and long-term benefits of fewer grade retentions and increased graduation rates.
3. Children in grades 1-3- PreK-3 insures children enter high-quality elementary schools and focuses on the classroom experience and on the overall school environment.
4. Parents and teachers – PreK-3 recognizes the role parents and teachers play in child development emphasizing multiple avenues for families' participation and setting expectations for teacher preparation and professional development.
5. Education reform efforts – PreK-3 makes education reform more child-friendly. It bridges the gap between two education movements, school readiness and school improvement.
6. Policymakers- PreK-3 gives clarity to currently fragmented, unaligned and uncoordinated school readiness efforts calling for a policy framework that defines coherent standards that transcend disparate programs, departments and funding streams.

Conclusion

There is no single solution to raising student achievement and instead we should use a multi-dimensional approach that includes high standards that are aligned and emphasize learning across the birth to 3rd grade continuum.

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