

ABSTRACT

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The Influence of Head Start and Other Pre-School Programs on Student Achievement.
(Major Professor: Kim Kimbell-Lopez PhD)

The Purpose of this study was to investigate the influence that Head Start and district operated pre-school programs for economically disadvantaged students on the scores of a state mandated tests given at third grade. The data used in this study was collected from the attendance records of Head Start and the district operated pre-school and test scores in grade three of a school district in East Texas. The attendance data from the 1997-1998 and the 1998-1999 school years were used with the test data for the years that these students were in grade three (2001-2002 and 2002-2003). The scores from the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) given during the 2001-2002 school year and the scores of the Texas Assessments of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) given during the 2002-2003 school year were used in this study. The TAAKS scores were reported by the stat in percentages but the TAKS scores were reported as scale scores. These had to be converted but this was possible using the formula given on the Texas Education Agency website. The students were divided into two large groups; economically disadvantaged students and advantaged students. The membership in each group was determined by whether or not the student qualified for free or reduced lunch. Students on free or reduced lunch are considered to belong to the economically disadvantaged group. The groups' means were compared using an Analysis of Variance and a Tukey post hoc test. This study concluded that attending Head Start or pre-school did not close the gap between economically disadvantaged students and advantaged students if scores on state mandated test were used as the determining factor.