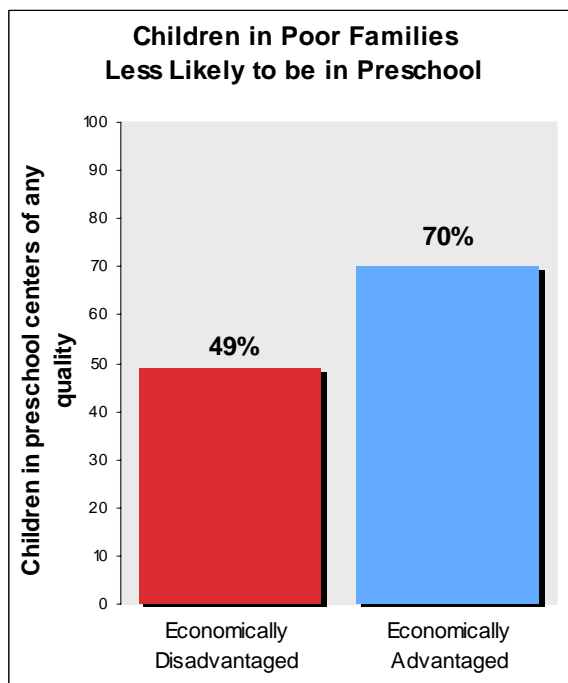


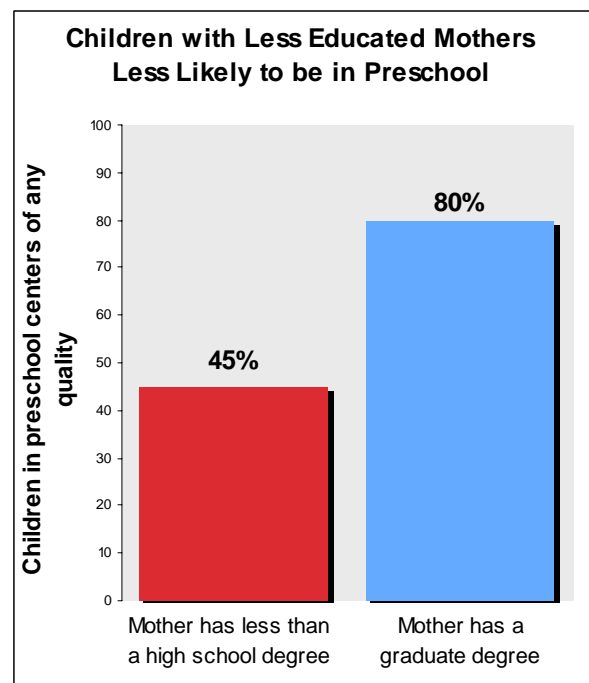
Preschool for California's 3 and 4 Year Olds: How Are We Doing? RAND's California Preschool Study

In the first comprehensive statewide look at early care and education for preschool-age children in California, researchers from the RAND Corporation surveyed a representative group of 2,000 parents with preschool-age children and more than 700 providers, and observed and evaluated about 250 child care and preschool centers. The top findings of the study, one in a series on California's preschool system, include:

Children who could benefit most from preschool are least likely to be in it



Just under half of 3 and 4 year olds in economically disadvantaged families are in preschool centers of any quality, compared to 70 percent of those in more well-off families.



Forty-five percent of children whose mothers have less than a high school degree are in preschool centers, compared to 80 percent of children whose mothers have a graduate or professional degree.

The parent survey found Mexican American, African American and low income parents reported the most difficulty finding the care they wanted.

Quality of preschools is mixed – most are engaging and emotionally supportive, but fall short on key features that prepare children for kindergarten

- At best, 15 percent of the children who could benefit most are in high-quality preschool programs that prepare them for success in K-12.
- An earlier RAND study defined those children who could benefit most as the groups of children who start out behind in kindergarten and stay behind in elementary school.
- Quality falls short across the board. There are no demographic or socioeconomic groups that, on average, are in high-quality programs that prepare them for kindergarten.

California has successful models for providing high-quality preschool, including some funded by First 5

- San Mateo and San Francisco's First 5 Power of Preschool programs exceed the quality of a nationally recognized program showing significant gains for children in early reading and math skills.



Such high-quality programs:

- employ well-trained and qualified teachers;
- provide financial incentives for preschools to reach and maintain higher levels of quality; and
- offer rich learning environments with research-based curriculum.

California must build on these successes to create a high-quality early care and education system that helps close our achievement gap and benefits our state's economy

- High-quality preschool helps close the achievement gap by addressing the school readiness gap, according to a 2007 RAND study.
- A targeted preschool program in California would begin to pay for itself within six years, according to a 2007 study by the Economic Policy Institute.
- Proposed California legislation would lay the groundwork for reforming our preschool system to provide programs that prepare kids for success in school.

For more information, including links to the RAND study and executive summary, visit: <http://www.preschoolcalifornia.org/rand>.