



Strong Beginnings Child Care

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Fast facts

- ▲ In 2008, 361 Strong Beginnings children were screened at regular age intervals with the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). Sixty-five percent were developmentally on target in five domains on their final ASQ screens.
- ▲ Eighty-three percent of Strong Beginnings students entering Minneapolis kindergarten scored solidly on track for reading success compared to 66 percent of all entering kindergartners
- ▲ More than two-thirds of Strong Beginnings families were actively engaged in their child's early development and education. Approximately 95 percent of parents participated in transition to kindergarten activities; between 75 and 100 percent of parents participated in reading activities; and between 75 and 100 percent of parents participated in parent-teacher conferences.

What is Strong Beginnings Child Care?

Children who attend high-quality child care programs tend to earn better grades, are less likely to repeat a grade or require special education, and are more likely to graduate from high school and enroll in college. The Strong Beginnings program focuses on detecting and remediating developmental challenges, promoting school readiness and engaging parents in their child's learning.

Research confirms that at least half of the educational achievement gaps between poor and non-poor children already exist at kindergarten. Hennepin County and community partners created Strong Beginnings Child Care in 1991 as a selective early intervention program.

Children attending a Strong Beginnings child care site are assessed for development -- cognitive, emotional and physical -- at regular intervals, and interventions are developed when needed. Class sizes are kept small, and programming engages parents as partners in their child's development and education.

How many use Strong Beginnings and at what cost?

In 2008, 12 Strong Beginnings centers served approximately 750 children at a cost of about \$6 million. State and federal funds pay for the program.

Strong Beginnings child care sites are reimbursed above the state's maximum childcare subsidy rates if they have national accreditation status, meet Strong Beginnings program guidelines, and serve a minimum of sixty-five percent low-income and special needs children. The special rates support the high-quality early care and education components, which in turn promote early childhood development and school readiness.

Who uses Strong Beginnings?

About 90 percent of the children enrolled in the program received subsidized child care through the Minnesota Family Investment Program or the Basic Sliding Fee Program.

Strong Beginnings students entering kindergarten were Black/African American (41 percent), white (33 percent), American Indian/Native Alaskan (19 percent), Hispanic/Latino (4 percent), Asian/Pacific Islander (3 percent).

Is Strong Beginnings effective?

Since 2005, the percentage of Strong Beginnings students meeting or exceeding literacy standard benchmarks on the Minneapolis Beginning Kindergarten Assessment has been higher than the percentage of all entering Minneapolis kindergarten students.