

National Study of Public Montessori Preschool

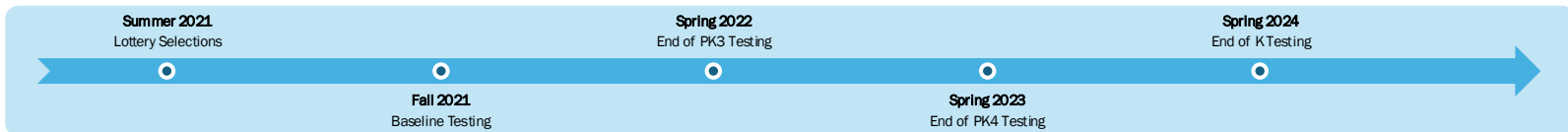
Summary of the Research Findings

Who participated, and when?

Beginning in 2021, this randomized controlled trial followed 588 children from age 3 through kindergarten who were entered in competitive lotteries at 24 public Montessori schools across the United States.

- The **Montessori group** of 242 children were offered a spot to attend one of the Montessori schools.
- The **control group** of 346 children were put on the waitlist; most attended other types of early childhood programs.

Children were assessed at entry (i.e., baseline) to the 3-year-old prekindergarten year (PK3) and again at the end of the PK3, PK4, and kindergarten years (K).



What were the results?

Baseline, end of PK3 & PK4: The Montessori group performed significantly better on mastery orientation at the end of PK3. There were no other group differences at these timepoints.

End of Kindergarten: After controlling for baseline scores and demographics, the Montessori group performed significantly better on **early reading, short-term memory, executive function, and social understanding**. They performed the same on all other measures. Effect sizes are shown in the figure on the right.

Cost Analysis: Three years of public Montessori (ages 3 to 6) cost districts an estimated \$13,127 less/child to implement than traditional programs, mainly due to higher child: teacher ratios in Montessori as compared to traditional preschool in PK3/PK4.

Limitations: There was considerable attrition and missing data, but results were robust to several checks on the limitations.

Key Takeaways

The 3-year public Montessori preschool model supports better outcomes in many domains in kindergarten and is estimated to cost districts less to implement.



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Measures and Outcomes

Eight different assessments measured children's academic, social, and cognitive development at each timepoint.

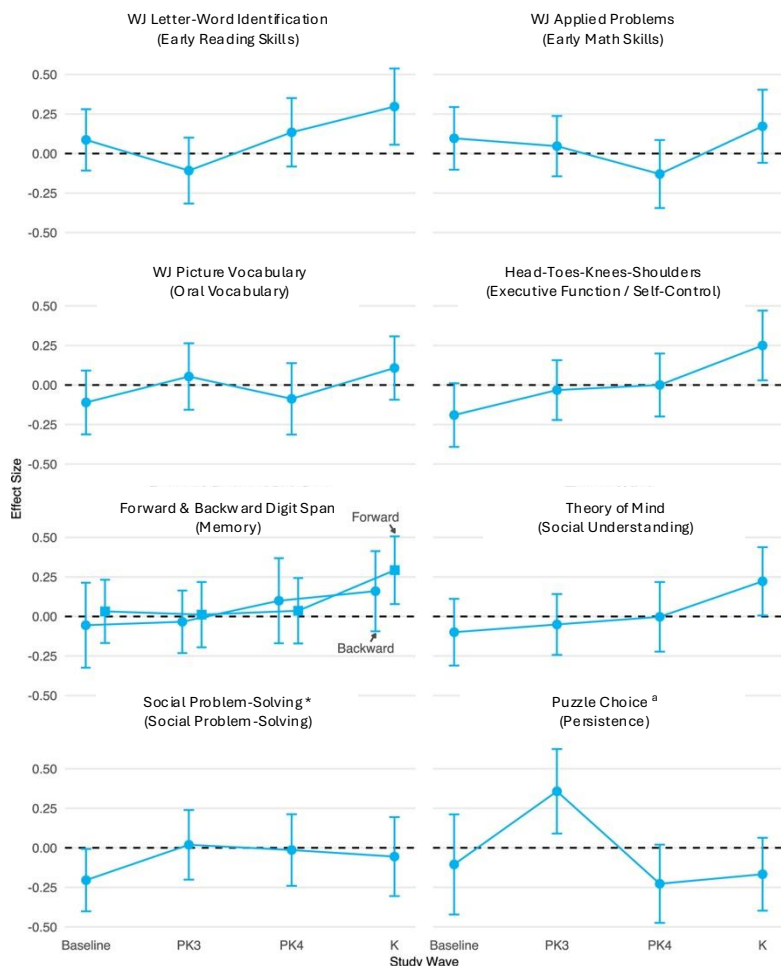


Fig. 1. The blue dots show the average difference between the Montessori group and control group at each testing timepoint. Values above zero mean the Montessori group scored higher. The bars show the range around each average, reflecting variability in the results. WJ = Woodcock Johnson (III) extended battery

* These two measures, as implemented, have not been validated.