



book harvest

PRE-K NAVIGATION

**PRESCHOOL IS A GAME CHANGER.
LET'S UNLOCK IT FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST.**

THE OPPORTUNITY

The landmark [Perry Preschool Project](#) and [Abecedarian Study](#) have established that high-quality early care and education produce profound and lifelong benefits for participating children. Children in low-income families who attend high-quality preschool showed better rates of academic achievement, high school graduation, and post-secondary education. But the gains go *far* beyond that, extending to a reduction in teen pregnancies, higher IQs, higher rates of homeownership, lower rates of incarceration, and better physical health as measured by rates of hypertension, obesity, and heart disease.

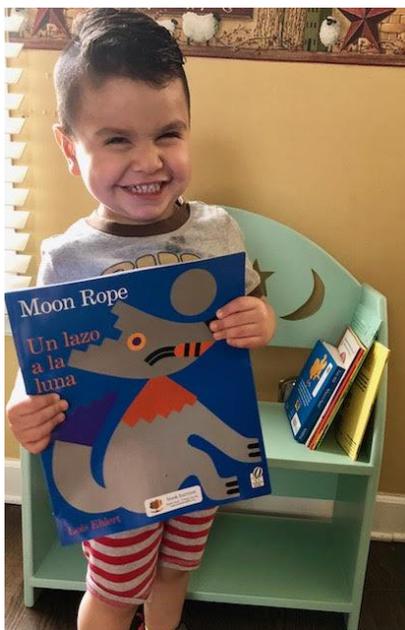
Remarkably, these benefits extend for decades, into the study subjects' forties and fifties -- and this year, they were found to be *generational*, extending to the children and even the grandchildren of study participants.

THE CHALLENGE

Accessing Pre-K is difficult for low-income families.

In Durham, that has profound implications: 47% of children between 3 and 5 years old live in low-income households; additionally, 22% are of Latino descent and speak Spanish at home. Although there are more than two eligible Pre-K age children for every one Pre-K slot available in Durham, remarkably, there is an 18% average vacancy rate in these programs. *Valuable Pre-K slots are going unused, keeping young children from accessing the spectacular lifelong and generational benefits of early education.*

Why? Among the reasons that create roadblocks to accessing Pre-K: locations that are inaccessible by public transportation; care that is not culturally responsive, notably not bilingual; prohibitive cost, even with a subsidy; and a complicated, arduous application process.



OUR RESPONSE

At Book Harvest, we want the very families who stand to gain the most benefit from Pre-K to access it. Thus, we need to remove the roadblocks.

We conducted a pilot program in 2018 to test an innovative idea: could a dedicated staff member providing concierge-level services to low-income families ensure that all families have access to Pre-K? We hired a part-time Pre-K navigator to find out. The results were *transformative*: of the 12 families whom she assisted in applying for high-quality pre-K, 10 of those children are currently enrolled in high-quality Pre-K.

Since the fall of 2019, our full-time Early Childhood Services Navigator has continued this critically important work and has extended our navigation services to include support for kindergarten enrollment as well. This bilingual team member meets parents where they are with individualized assistance in overcoming the barriers they face to Pre-K enrollment, and she provides home visits with families in their last year of our Book Babies program to assist with kindergarten enrollment. We expect that this combination of supports will exponentially increase the number of families that apply for and enroll their children in Pre-K programs and will help make the transition to kindergarten for our Book Babies graduates seamless and successful.

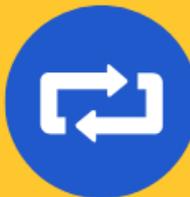
The Impact of High-Quality Pre-K on "the economics of human flourishing"



- **Increased rates of kindergarten readiness and 3rd grade reading proficiency**
- **High school graduation rates increased by as much as 44%**



- **Decreased crime and incarceration rates, as well as decreased interactions with the justice system**
- **Higher rates of home and car ownership**
- **Decreased rates of teenage pregnancies**



- **Workforce vastly better aligned with the needs of the future economy**
- **Larger tax base**
- **Return per \$1 invested: \$12.90**

Sources:

"FPG's Abecedarian Project and the Perry Preschool Project Bring Better Health Decades Later," University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, <https://fpg.unc.edu/news/fpgs-abecedarian-project-and-perry-preschool-project-bring-better-health-decades-later>.

"Perry Preschool Project," Highscope, <https://highscope.org/perry-preschool-project/>.

"Nobel laureate James Heckman discusses the shocking importance of an elementary education," Northwestern Business Review, <https://northwesternbusinessreview.org/nobel-laureate-james-heckman-discusses-the-shocking-importance-of-an-elementary-education-629616ec062d>.

Book Harvest provides an abundance of books and ongoing literacy support to families and their children from birth and serves as a model for communities committed to ensuring that children are lifelong readers and learners. Our vision is of a world in which reading, learning, and access to information are considered rights, not privileges, so that all children thrive.