

## Study illustrates benefits of early childhood education

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Students are pictured at an area TOP Early Learning Center – with a recent study showing enrollment provides positive long-term outcomes for its most impoverished attendees.

COURTESY

WICHITA –For the past 14 years, TOP (The Opportunity Project) Early Learning Centers, in partnership with Wichita State University and local Unified School Districts 259 and 260, has conducted a study to determine the long-term outcomes for children living in poverty who receive a high-quality early childhood education like that provided

at TOP Early Learning Centers. Results are conclusive; at least through the 12th grade, TOP graduates' performances in academic and social domains are equal to or greater than their non-TOP peers.

"As educators, we know we are doing a good job because we see the positive changes in the children we serve," said Cornelia Stevens, executive director of TOP Early Learning Centers. "We know what level of performance every child can achieve when they begin their educational journey at our schools and when they graduate, ready to move on to kindergarten. The longitudinal study shows us the gains these children make remain with them at least through high school graduation. It's an incredible feeling knowing we've been able to make a lasting change in a child whose odds were stacked against them."