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September 2017 IDRA Newsletter

This month's focus: Culture of Poverty Myths



"We can pursue shared prosperity by keeping our eyes on the goal of quality education for every child in every school, understanding that education matters, community voices matter in education, and much is known about what to do." - Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, IDRA President and CEO

In the culture-of-poverty perspective, the traits (and deficits) of students are the focus. But IDRA's culture of possibility frame recognizes the assets of students and focuses on the responsibility of the institution. This issue of the IDRA Newsletter features...

- **Tying the Knot Between School Finance Policy and Serving All Students**, by David G. Hinojosa, J.D.
- **Investing in Early Childhood Education Programs Yields High Returns**, by Paula Johnson, M.A.
- **Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program Winning Essay** - Ana Luisa Valenzuela
- **Semillitas de Aprendizaje** - Early Childhood Bilingual Literacy Development

Culture of Poverty Myths

Tying the Knot Between School Finance Policy and Serving All Students

by David G. Hinojosa, J.D.

For several decades, debates have dominated statehouses across the country on whether money makes a difference in education. This debate often surfaces whenever a question arises about whether the state is fulfilling its obligation to equitably and sufficiently fund a quality education for all students in all school districts.

Yet, despite rhetoric from a few holdouts surmising that money does not make a difference in education, most readily acknowledge that money can make a difference (Hanushek, 2015). Indeed, strong, recent research shows that increased funding by the states has contributed to both improved student performance and lifetime outcomes, especially for underserved students (Jackson, 2016; Lafortune, 2016).



Figuring out the true costs of educating all students is not an exact science. However, there is a cost for virtually every education service and for ensuring a well-educated workforce to serve students. Education cost studies - when done right - can provide policymakers estimates of funding actual student need. This is a first critical step in enabling policymakers to bridge educational funding policy with effective research and practice . - [Keep reading](#)

Investing in Early Childhood Education Programs Yields High Returns

by Paula Johnson, M.A.

Numerous studies have confirmed the positive effects of preschool programs on future student achievement (NEA, 2017). Data from the latest census, however, reveals that only 64.2 percent of all 3-, 4- and 5-year-old children are being enrolled in preprimary programs (NCES, 2016).

Studies have found many long-term benefits of preprimary education across three broad categories: (1) academics, (2) social skills and (3) attitudes toward school (Bakken, et al., 2017). In this article, I present the long-term academic and societal effects of high-quality early childhood programs, elements of high-quality programs,



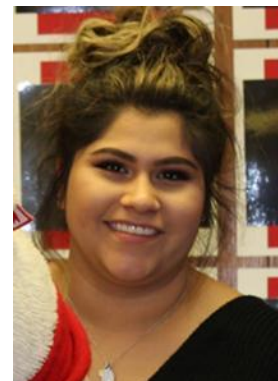
current enrollment trends among preschool-age children, barriers to enrollment and implications for public policy toward increasing participation . - [Keep reading](#)



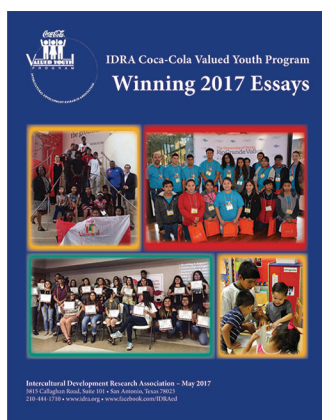
Video clip: María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, Ph.D., on the benefits of early childhood education

Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program Winning Essay - Ana Luisa Valenzuela

I'm going to be quite frank with you, I'm not going to tell you some generic story about how I joined the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program because I love working with kids. Although I really do love working with kids, that's not the real reason I got into this program in the beginning. To be honest, the reason I joined was because I thought it would be cool to get some extra cash just for going to class. But I took a little more than just money from this program .

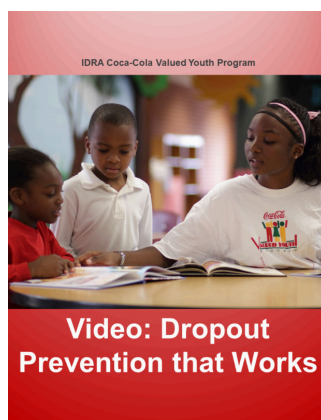


This also made me understand how impressionable and vulnerable kids are in this world. I didn't realize that I would be a role model for these kids. Every day that I enter my classroom, I get welcomed with hugs and artwork that my tutee and his classmates created. Every day, I get told stories about what they did the previous day. I feel like if a kid can tell you about their day or a secret, you are a role model and, more importantly, a friend to them. - [Keep reading](#)



Booklet with the six winning essays

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Overview of how the program impacts students & schools

[See Video](#)



Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program brochure

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Semillitas de Aprendizaje Early Childhood Bilingual Literacy Development Supplemental Early Childhood Curriculum & Training

Semillitas de Aprendizaje is a bilingual (Spanish/English) supplemental early childhood curriculum by IDRA that is based on the **art of storytelling**. It **stems from research** IDRA conducted on its Reading Early for Academic Development (READ) project, funded by the

U.S. Department of Education, to establish in preschool centers "classrooms of excellence" that ensure **reading, cognitive and emotional success** for all preschool children through a print-rich environment.

The curriculum reflects elements of **Ellen Galinsky's seven essential life skills** every child needs to thrive as life-long learners and to take on life's challenges. These skills give children the ability to focus on goals, expand their intellectual capacity, cultivate strong, positive self-esteem and stimulate intellectual curiosity. Using culturally appropriate and robust language encourages children to learn easily and communicate what they have learned.



Semillitas de Aprendizaje also incorporates the **Head Start Early Childhood competency indicators** through literacy center activities that focus on listening and understanding, speaking and communicating, phonological awareness, comprehension, book knowledge and use, print knowledge and emergent writing - [Keep reading](#)



Visit the Semillitas de Aprendizaje website to see sample classroom lesson, scope and sequence (two), and sample video clips from the Storytelling DVD.

Featured Classnotes Podcasts

Podcasts on School Funding

- [Key Issues in the Texas School Funding Trial - #155](#)
- [Fair Funding Now! for Excellent Schooling - #102](#)
- [Implications of Inequitable School Funding - #68](#)
- [Fundamentals for School Change - #52](#)



Podcasts on the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program - Student Perspectives

- [They start calling my name \(on being a Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program tutor\) - #135](#)
- [The Power of Student Voices in Dropout Prevention - #125](#)
- [Student Voices on Being Valued - #54](#)

Podcasts on Early Childhood Education

- [Geometry in Early Childhood - #139](#)
- [Readers Theatre in Early Childhood Ed - #134](#)
- [Bilingual Stories for Young Learners - #80](#)

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The Intercultural Development Research Association is an independent, non-profit organization. Our mission is to achieve equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college. IDRA strengthens and transforms public education by providing dynamic training; useful research, evaluation, and frameworks for action; timely policy analyses; and innovative materials and programs.

We are committed to the IDRA valuing philosophy, respecting the knowledge and skills of the individuals we work with and build on the strengths of the students and parents in their schools.