

Aggregating evidence on preprimary education

While SIEF has a large portfolio of [individual evaluations](#), we sometimes also invest in compilations of evidence. Recently, SIEF funded a [review](#) of the experimental and quasi-experimental evidence focused on preprimary education. Using meta-analytic methods on 55 studies from around the world, the authors find significant average improvements in children's cognitive (0.15 sd) and executive functions, social-emotional learning, and behavior (0.12 sd) during the preprimary period, with no significant differences between high and low & middle income countries. Estimates from a more limited set of longitudinal studies indicate persistence of advantages of 0.07 sd in each type of skills beyond the preprimary period, suggesting that investments in preprimary education can make primary instruction more effective. In studies that report separate effects for populations that vary in socio-economic status, disadvantaged children benefit significantly more on average from preprimary interventions. Benefit-to-cost ratios estimated for a subset of studies conducted in low- and middle-income countries range from 1.7 to 103.5. The review included SIEF-funded evaluations conducted in [Malawi](#), [Ghana](#), [Mozambique](#), and [Bangladesh](#).



Latest Evidence to Policy Note

This month SIEF released an [Evidence to Policy note](#) on a comparison of approaches for

delivering a parenting program in India. Delivering parenting programs at scale and in a cost-effective manner has been a challenge, in part because some of the most successful programs have been delivered through intensive and relatively costly home-based programs. In a SIEF supported [randomized evaluation in Odisha, India](#), researchers tested different ways of delivering weekly parenting sessions for two years. Children and their mothers received either nutritional education, nutritional education and individual home-based child development sessions, or nutritional education and group-based child development group sessions, depending on which community they lived in. The [evaluation found](#) that compared to receiving no intervention, the individual home-based sessions and group sessions both improved children's language and cognition, and they were equally effective. The group sessions were much cheaper to implement, however, costing \$38 per child per year, which was roughly a quarter of the cost of home visits. The nutrition education had no impact, suggesting knowledge may not be an important barrier to better nutrition in this context.



Performance pay for teachers

The authors of a [SIEF-support evaluation of performance pay](#) for teachers in Rwanda recently [blogged](#) about [the results of their evaluation](#). This experiment was set up to separately identify the effects of performance pay on teachers' effort in the classroom and the effects that performance contracts may have on the type of teachers that joins the teaching profession. The study found that offering performance-based bonuses for the top 20 percent of teachers did not attract teachers with lower teacher skills, compared to offers of fixed wage contracts. Once in school, offers of performance-based bonuses increased teachers' presence in the classroom and improved their pedagogical practices. The performance pay also helped them elicit higher test-score performance from their students. SIEF has also supported other evaluations of performance pay in education in [Guinea](#), [India](#), [Tanzania](#), and [Uganda](#).

