

Summer Start

Summer Start would provide an extended-year, full-day kindergarten to disadvantaged children by enabling them to begin kindergarten the summer before they would ordinarily enter and to continue through the summer after kindergarten, right before entering first grade.

Summer Start would provide these children with the chance to catch up earlier on basic skills (the summer before regular kindergarten entry) so they would be developmentally more ready to acquire higher skills during the regular kindergarten period. Research evidence suggests that the higher-skills gap that exists between advantaged and disadvantaged children at the end of the regular kindergarten year would narrow if there were more time for reinforcement (the summer after kindergarten).

19,455 four-year olds are being served by Head Start in Mississippi. However, 26,000 four-year olds are not being served and, thus, are at risk of entering kindergarten as five-year olds without possessing basic skills.

Summer Start assumes providing young children with the same supports available to elementary students, including meals, transportation, school nurses, special education, counseling and other services as required.

Summer Start could reduce the need for remediation and special education, lower dropout rates, increase the supply of productive citizens, and ultimately save the state millions.

Education remains the best hope for lifting children out of poverty.