

# THE CASE FOR ARTS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The research is clear: The **first few years of a child's life are a critical time** to prepare them for a lifetime of success in the classroom and beyond. Get the facts about how Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts' **research-based programs are making a difference for students and teachers** through high quality professional development and rich in-classroom experiences.



High quality **early childhood education** gives children a strong start in school and in life.

High quality early childhood opportunities are proven to contribute to strong language, literacy, mathematics, and social/emotional skills for all children with even greater impacts on children in economically-disadvantaged circumstances. (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2017) (Child Trends, 2018)

(The First Five Years Fund, n.d.)



**Teachers need tools and best practices** in order to set their students up for success.

**When asked what effective professional development looks like, teachers describe learning that is relevant, hands-on, and sustained over time.** (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2014)

**Continuing education and training for teachers** is a critical component in the **10 standards for accreditation** of early learning programs established by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. (Children, n.d.)



The performing arts are a powerful, effective teaching tool that **unlocks children's innate desire for joyful, active learning.**

**Multi-sensory experiences help young children build cognitive and social skills, and cultivate emotional and physical health.** (Child H.U., 2014)

In arts-integrated activities, children are **simultaneously engaging different senses**—sight, sound, movement—that **create and strengthen connections across the brain**. Giving children these experiences early in life helps build a stronger, more permanent base for continued brain development. (Child H.U., 2014)

# REAL-WORLD IMPACT

Backed by more than 40 years of experience, Wolf Trap Institute leverages the power of the performing arts to support the professional development of educators and engage learners. Independent research of Wolf Trap Institute programs demonstrates that providing teachers with the tools to integrate the arts into their classrooms leads to deeper, more meaningful learning for young children.

Strong Teacher-Child Interactions	<p><b>Arts integration builds strong teacher-child relationships, which are key factors in future academic success.</b></p> <p>When integrating the arts into early STEM learning, children were effectively able to engage in analysis and reasoning through enhanced teacher interaction. Teachers were able to provide opportunities to engage children in the creation of ideas or products [demonstrated learning] that prompted their thought processes. (Clinton &amp; Bhattacharya, 2020)</p>
Increased Language Development	<p><b>Kindergarteners showed meaningful improvements in language development.</b></p> <p>Kindergarten students whose teachers participated in a multi-year Wolf Trap program showed improvements in language development. This was especially true of both African-American students and English Language Learners (ELL) from low-income communities. (Alliance Arts for Learning Institute, 2012)</p>
Social/Emotional Growth	<p><b>Students made gains in academic achievement and social/emotional development.</b></p> <p>Head Start students whose teachers participated in the Wolf Trap program showed significant gains in social/emotional development, science and technology knowledge, and approaches to learning. (Green &amp; Sawilowsky, 2015)</p>
34 Days of Extra Learning in Math	<p><b>Students gained more than one extra month of learning in math.</b></p> <p>Preschool and kindergarten students who participated in Wolf Trap residencies gained 34 days of additional learning in math in the second year of the program. (Song, Ludwig &amp; Marklein, 2016)</p>
Improved Teacher Practice	<p><b>Teachers felt more creative and confident in their abilities.</b></p> <p>92% of participating Wolf Trap teachers reported feeling confident in their ability to facilitate interactive drama activities, be creative, and seek out opportunities to integrate arts education into core curriculum. (Clay, Campbell &amp; Madsen, 2015)</p>

## Learn more at [wolftrap.org/institute](https://wolftrap.org/institute)

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**WOLF TRAP** | INSTITUTE FOR  
EARLY LEARNING  
THROUGH THE ARTS

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