

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS
1126 EAST 59TH STREET
CHICAGO • ILLINOIS 60637

JAMES J. HECKMAN
*Henry Schultz Distinguished Service
Professor of Economics*

TELEPHONE: (773) 702-3478
FACSIMILE: (773) 702-8490
E-MAIL: jjh.info@gmail.com

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To the Editors:

Regarding your article in the August 17th issue, “Dumb Money, Too Many nations are wasting their school spending. Here’s how to get it right,” I am less concerned about the misrepresentation of where I work—the University of Chicago, not Harvard—than the misinterpretation of my work on the value of investing in early childhood development for disadvantaged children. There is an immediate positive impact on the child and family closely followed by accruing benefits to society that more than offset the cost of investment. We do not wait for a decade to see dividends—we see it when children reach school age. Effective zero-to-five early childhood development reduces the need for special education. 36% of girls who did not receive early childhood development needed special education in contrast to only 8% among those who received it. Beyond simply reducing the costs of special education, there is the economic and social benefit of preventing the achievement gap rather than trying to close it when it is often too late. The value of investing in effective early childhood development is not confusing. What is confusing is why we are not embracing the facts and reaping the benefits.



James Heckman
Henry Schultz Distinguished Professor of Economics
University of Chicago