

## Attentive kindergarteners grow up to be better workers: study

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Globe and Mail Update

Posted on Tuesday, January 31, 2012 9:24AM EST



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Are you a focused worker bee? If you are, you might have been that way since kindergarten. And not just because you picked up the alphabet or numeracy early; it's also due to how well you paid attention in class.

[A new study out of the University of Montreal](#) has found that attentiveness in kindergarten “accurately predicts the development of ‘work-oriented’ skills in school children,” according to a release from the school.

Researchers looked at teachers' observations of the attention skills of more than 1,000 kindergarten children.

Then, from grades 1 to 6, homeroom teachers were asked to rate how well the kids worked by themselves and in teams, their levels of self-control and self-confidence, and their ability to follow directions and rules.

These are all qualities that may pay off later for adults, Linda Pagani, a professor and researcher at the University of Montreal suggested in the release.

“For children, the classroom is the workplace, and this is why productive, task-oriented behaviour in that context later translates to the labour market.

“Children who are more likely to work autonomously and harmoniously with fellow classmates, with good self-control and confidence, and who follow directions and rules are more likely to continue such productive behaviours into the adult workplace. In child psychology, we call this the developmental evolution of work-oriented skills, from childhood to adulthood.”

Researchers found that boys, aggressive children, and children with lower cognitive skills in kindergarten were much more likely to belong to the group with the poorest attention skills - and later, the poorest work-oriented skills.

“There are important life risks associated with attention deficits in childhood, which include high-school dropout, unemployment, and problematic substance abuse,” Prof. Pagani said.

Prof. Pagani said her research makes a case for early intervention and treatment of attention problems. But she also suggested that further study is required to examine how the the classroom itself affects kids' attention spans.

**Do you think that attention skills play a crucial long-term role - over, say, creativity? Or can studies like this fuel even more parental anxiety over the risks of attention-deficit disorders?**