EDUCATION, YOUTH & FAMILIES
Early Childhood & K-12 Education

Measuring the outcomes that matter for a lifetime of learning

To better teach children, we need to understand which practices work in the classroom. Abt has more than 40 years of experience using our expertise in education, technical assistance and research and evaluation to analyze programs that prepare children to succeed. We evaluate the effectiveness of national and local early childhood programs, emphasizing improved outcomes for disadvantaged children. For example, we’re assessing the Massachusetts Preschool Expansion Grant program’s implementation, cost-effectiveness and impact on student outcomes—particularly on readiness for kindergarten, vocabulary acquisition and proficiency in math and reading.

We help policymakers, teachers and leaders identify features of high-quality education systems. Our work includes analyzing strategies for building literacy and assessing programs that encourage student involvement in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). We provided technical and analytic support for the U.S. Department of Education’s Mathematics and Science Partnership program for over a decade.

We’re investigating a combination of interventions within Upward Bound, as well as the implementation and effects of customized text messaging in GEAR UP. Both are federal programs that promote postsecondary readiness among high school students.

Abt’s work on the Early Learning Study at Harvard (ELS@H) will follow approximately 5,000 three-, four- and five-year-olds from across Massachusetts to shed light on how families access early care and education.
Postsecondary and Adult Education

Developing evidence that guides students to success

Postsecondary and adult learners face many challenges when pursuing their educational goals. Abt can help students overcome these challenges, enter rewarding careers and meet workforce needs. Abt designs and conducts systematic evidence reviews of postsecondary preparation programs and strategies. As leaders of the What Works Clearinghouse Postsecondary Education, Postsecondary Preparation and Evidence Reporting project, we produce timely products that synthesize evidence using What Works Clearinghouse standards and strategically target key stakeholders who want to adopt, develop or scale postsecondary interventions.

The Success Boston program provides one-on-one coaching to students to help them succeed when entering college. Abt is conducting a longitudinal evaluation to better understand how services were implemented and whether the program is helping more students finish college.

We’re also expanding knowledge about career pathways systems and programs, which offer between-occupation training and support services that allow individuals to advance in their careers. Our team is conducting a series of studies that focus on labor-market context, meta-analysis of existing data and the potential of predictive analytics and machine learning.
Youth and Families

Finding the best ways to keep families together

Abt is engaged in several federal efforts to build and assess evidence on how best to prevent foster care placements. We’re working with the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) on several efforts related to child welfare.

As part of our work for the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse, we conduct an objective and transparent review of research on programs and services intended to provide enhanced support to children and families and prevent foster care placements. This review focuses on evidence in the areas of mental health, substance abuse prevention and treatment, and in-home parent skill-based programs and services, as well as kinship navigator programs.

We’re also working with ACF to learn more about which recovery and reunification interventions for families work. This project is designed to assess evidence on one-on-one recovery coaching and lay the foundation for a future impact evaluation.

Our Building Capacity to Evaluate Child Welfare Community Collaborations to Strengthen and Preserve Families project is a marquee federal effort, also supported by ACF, to prevent child abuse and neglect. We work directly with grantees to build their internal evaluation capacity. Additionally, we’re also conducting a cross-site evaluation to determine how systemic change can be achieved in the child welfare system.
The Abt Advantage

From the ABCs of reading to the DNA of science, education helps people succeed. Abt finds ways to make education fulfill its promise and supports environments where children can thrive. Our studies cover education from early childhood to adulthood and emphasize supporting disadvantaged students and families. We develop rigorous methodologies to help federal, state and local policymakers and professionals determine which policies and programs work and we suggest how to fix what doesn’t. Through our technical assistance, we enable stakeholders to implement best practices. The work we do empowers children, youth and adults to develop the skills they need to find success after graduation, which results in healthier, safer and more stable families.
Bold Ideas. Real Results.

Abt Associates is an engine for social impact, dedicated to moving people from vulnerability to security. Harnessing the power of data and our experts’ grounded insights, we provide research, consulting and technical services globally in the areas of health, environmental and social policy, technology and international development.

Key Focus Areas

Education, Youth & Families  Environment & Energy  Food Security & Agriculture  Gender Equality & Social Inclusion  Governance & Justice  Health  Housing, Communities & Asset Building  Workforce & Economic Mobility

Cross-Cutting Core Capabilities

Communications & Behavior Change  Data Capture & Surveys  Digital Transformations  Research, Monitoring & Evaluation  Technical Assistance & Implementation