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Money Talks, Kids Listen

New Research Shows Children Are Ready to Learn About Finance at a Young Age – And Want To!

Chicago, Illinois. April 12, 2016 – An important study to be released in the Spring Issue of *The Journal of Private Enterprise* shows that elementary school students as young as 3rd grade are not only able to understand key concepts about finance and economics, they're eager to.

Many parents think teaching young kids about money is like asking them to eat spinach, so they put it off. It is a common misconception that children don't understand money, but it simply isn't true and this new [research](#) backs that up.

The study¹, conducted by Mark Schug, Ph.D., a nationally recognized financial and economic education scholar and his colleagues Mary Suiter Ph.D., at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, and Eric Hagedorn, Ph.D., at University School of Milwaukee and formerly at the University of Texas El Paso, tested over 2,500 Chicago area 3rd-graders before and after they completed a six-week financial literacy course. Until now, there has been little documented research that measures financial literacy in children. Schug's groundbreaking study confirms what financial experts have been saying since the 1960s: young children can – and want to – learn about money. In fact, the 2,500 third-graders' attitude and knowledge about money improved *significantly* after completing the lesson plan. Schug and colleagues reported that teachers liked it, parents liked it, and more importantly, the kids ate it up.

“... our effort reveals that children can make progress toward becoming financially literate. This finding is important. We would never expect adults to be competent at reading or mathematics if those subjects were not introduced early and repeated regularly in the school curriculum. In the same way, economic and financial education ought to start early and be repeated often. We have evidence that children across grades K–8 can make gains in their economic and financial understanding. All we need to do is teach them.” (Mark Schug)

The study, conducted using a curriculum developed by [Money Savvy Generation](#) that has been used in Chicago Public Elementary Schools for eight years, focuses on four core components of financial literacy -- *Save, Spend, Donate, Invest* -- then teaches goal-setting skills around each one. To give the lessons a personal context, each student is given a [Money Savvy Pig](#) piggy bank with four separate slots (one for each category) so they can put what they learn into practice, in their own homes, right away.

Sound complicated? Not to these third-graders. Many children start to receive money at a young age in the form of gifts or allowance. They know they can *save* their money, and they know they can *spend* it. But according to the study, young children are ready to learn so much more.

One teacher who participated in the study had this to say:

“I have participated [in the Money Savvy Generation program] for the last four years and my students still stop me in the hall to tell me how they use their bank, what they are saving for, what charities they contribute to and how they are more aware of how they spend their money. As long as I can contribute to another generation of money managers I will take that opportunity.”
(Sawyer Elementary)

-- More --

Young children can – and want to – learn about money, but how young is young? According to Dr. David Whitebread and Dr. Sue Bingham², children start forming habits and ideas about money by age seven. That doesn't mean that your teenager is out of luck. It just means there's no good reason to put off financial education. When we start children early on the road to becoming smart money-managing adults, everyone wins.

1. "A Collaborative Approach To Financial Literacy in the Chicago Public Schools;" Mark Schug, Ph.D. (Professor Emeritus University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, National Consultant on Economic and Financial Education); Eric Hagedorn, Ph. D. (University School of Milwaukee); Mary Suiter, Ph.D. (Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis)
2. "Habit Formation and Learning in Young Children;" Dr. David Whitebread and Dr. Sue Bingham (University of Cambridge, May, 2013)

About Money Savvy Generation

[Money Savvy Generation](#) is an award-winning and nationally recognized authority in the field of financial literacy for children. They develop educational programs and curriculum, as well as innovative products, to help parents, educators and others teach kids the skills of basic personal finance. The company was co-founded by Susan and Michael Beacham in 1999 with the sole aim of providing the tools for parents and educators to teach kids about money. Susan is the inventor of [Money Savvy Pig](#), a 21st century bank that teaches kids about money choice. She is also the author of award-winning children's book series ("The Money Savvy Kids Club" and "O.M.G Official Money Guide For Teens") and "Savings Spree," the innovative iPhone App for kids. Money Savvy Generation solutions have appeared on Dr. Phil and have been featured in numerous print outlets, including *The New York Times*, *Time* magazine, *Washington Post* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

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