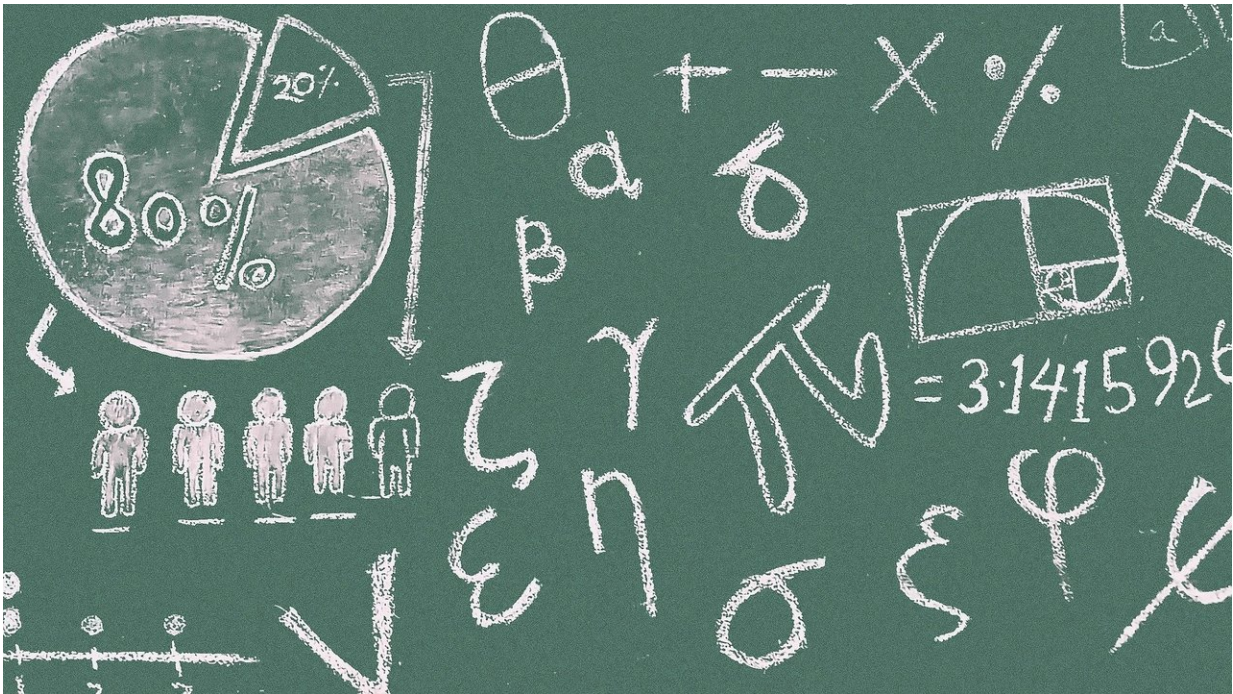


# Small group math instruction benefits young children

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Teaching math to small groups of low-income, minority kindergartners has a positive impact on their learning and can help bridge the divide with higher-income peers, say University of Michigan researchers.

Robin Jacob, co-director of the U-M Youth Policy Lab, and Brian Jacob, professor of education and public policy, evaluated kindergarten students

in the one-year [math](#) enrichment High 5s program in 24 low-income elementary schools in New York City.

They found that kids who participated in the program received 30 percent more time on [math instruction](#) with more individualized attention, and were exposed to a wider range of advanced math topics and more interactive activities.

"There is an observed gap in [achievement](#) between children living in poverty and their peers from higher-income households at school entry. That gap only continues to grow over time," said Robin Jacob. "By intervening early, the High 5s program narrowed the achievement gap between low-income children and their higher-income peers at the end of kindergarten."

Students enrolled in the High 5s program met in groups of four students with a trained facilitator for 30 minutes three times a week. Activities were delivered in a game-like format and intended to be fun, engaging, interactive and developmentally appropriate.

At the end of kindergarten, [student](#) math achievement was analyzed on two different measures—the Woodcock-Johnson applied problems subscale and REMA-K. The students in High 5s scored higher than the control students on the REMA-K.

The effect of the [program](#) was equivalent to about two-and-a-half months of learning on the assessment, the researchers said.

The U-M researchers are now working to develop a model for such small-group math instruction that requires fewer resources and could be more easily scaled.

"To date, there has been very little research about the effectiveness of

small group math instruction in the early elementary school grades," Robin Jacob said. "This study demonstrates that well implemented, engaging, small group instruction in math has the potential to boost math achievement."

**More information:** New evidence on the benefits of small group math instructions for young children. [www.brookings.edu/research/new...-for-young-children/](http://www.brookings.edu/research/new...-for-young-children/)

Provided by University of Michigan

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