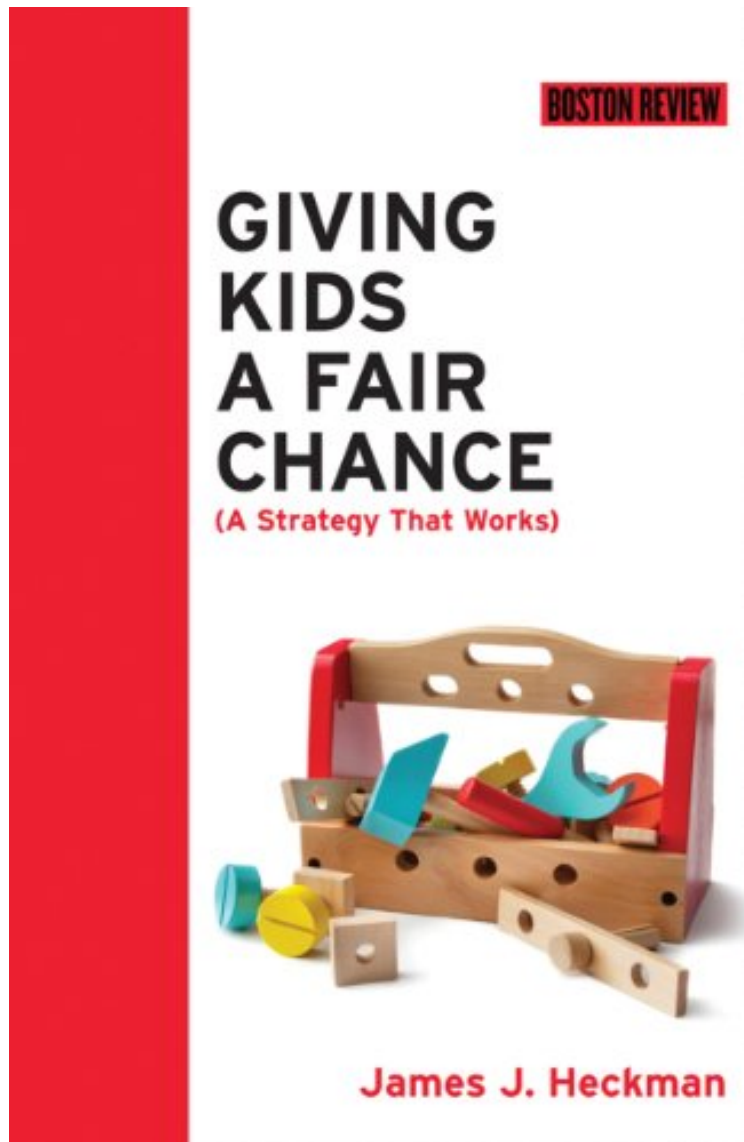


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Giving Kids a Fair Chance (Boston Review Books)

James J. Heckman

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James J. Heckman : Giving Kids a Fair Chance (Boston Review Books) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Giving Kids a Fair Chance (Boston Review Books):

17 of 18 people found the following review helpful. Very short, accessible introduction to the literature on early childhood education (such as preschool)By Stephen Weinberg Heckman writes for a very wide range of audiences, so you need to know what you're getting. The man is a Nobel Laureate in economics and a demigod in the statistics literature, so it isn't hard to find work of his that is challenging even for someone with a PhD in economics. But he also engages with a broader audience, and this particular book is aimed at a much wider audience. It ought to be accessible

to undergraduates, or even advanced high school students. It's a good starting point for learning about the subject, but it's not aimed at people who are already familiar with it. The book also differs from much of his writing in that it has a very explicit policy agenda: devote more resources to early childhood education. It lays out the arguments and evidence for early childhood education in a very quick, very readable way. It then offers short rebuttals/comments/extensions by a wide range of scholars and by Charles Murray, followed by Heckman's response to them. The book thus offers an excellent opportunity to get a wide range of snapshots about how academics approach the policy issue of whether to devote a lot of money to expanded pre-school offerings. I could imagine assigning this book to undergraduates, but it isn't advanced enough for my graduate students. So, for the right audience, this book is four stars. These debates are important and need to be presented at the intelligent, interested non-specialist level. However, if you're already familiar with Heckman's earlier work, this doesn't add much. It's somewhat depressing how little is added to Heckman, Krueger, and Friedman (2005), *Inequality in America: What Role for Human Capital Policies?* 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Solid Research to Use For Policy Change By shoshokie The research Heckman presented is rock solid. He presents it clearly and concisely in an easily understood manner. All governmental policy makers need to read this book and use it as the basis for increasing budgetary allowances for early educational funding. Heckman makes it clear that investing heavily in early educational interventions will bring far greater returns than the educational budget cuts ever could. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A great debate of public policy By Jun Heckman's idea is very simple but powerful. He exposes his theory with lots of data and statistic information. A great debate of public policy. The forum part is very plural and make both critics and compliments to Heckman's theory. Very good, short and introductive to the theme. Definitely deserves five stars.

In *Giving Kids a Fair Chance*, Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman argues that the accident of birth is the greatest source of inequality in America today. Children born into disadvantage are, by the time they start kindergarten, already at risk of dropping out of school, teen pregnancy, crime, and a lifetime of low-wage work. This is bad for all those born into disadvantage and bad for American society. Current social and education policies directed toward children focus on improving cognition, yet success in life requires more than smarts. Heckman calls for a refocus of social policy toward early childhood interventions designed to enhance both cognitive abilities and such non-cognitive skills as confidence and perseverance. This new focus on preschool intervention would emphasize improving the early environments of disadvantaged children and increasing the quality of parenting while respecting the primacy of the family and America's cultural diversity. Heckman shows that acting early has much greater positive economic and social impact than later interventions -- which range from reduced pupil-teacher ratios to adult literacy programs to expenditures on police -- that draw the most attention in the public policy debate. At a time when state and local budgets for early interventions are being cut, Heckman issues an urgent call for action and offers some practical steps for how to design and pay for new programs. The debate that follows delves deeply into some of the most fraught questions of our time: the sources of inequality, the role of schools in solving social problems, and how to invest public resources most effectively. Mike Rose, Geoffrey Canada, Charles Murray, Carol Dweck, Annette Lareau, and other prominent experts participate.

Giving Kids a Fair Chance is remarkable for the scientific advances that it represents, in good part due to Heckman and his co-authors.... The book stands out among economic studies in its attention to noncognitive skills, 'including strength of motivation, an ability to act on long-term plans, and the socioemotional regulation needed to work with others' or 'character.' (Science) About the Author James J. Heckman is the Henry Schultz Distinguished Service Professor of Economics at the University of Chicago. He was a recipient of the Nobel Prize for Economic Sciences in 2000. He is the coauthor (with Alan B. Krueger) of *Inequality in America: What Role for Human Capital Policies?* (MIT Press).