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Let's break down this travesty. A thread. (/14)

In 2015, a study called Sesame Street the largest & least costly early childhood intervention that has ever been implemented in the United States.

The program taught literacy and basic, core math skills to preschoolers. Cheaply. <https://t.co/2Uh0YLgF7o>

Who benefited most from a free Sesame Street? Economically disadvantaged kids and their families. Kids whose families weren't eligible for Head Start federal funding.

Kids who watched Sesame Street were better prepared to enter school and typically learned at grade level.

Kids who watched Sesame Street progressed at rates "appropriate for their age."

Why does this matter? Because academic inequality starts early in a child's education and can act as an anchor on their ability to excel as they get older. They fall behind and the gap gets wider.

If a child enters Kindergarten a year behind their peers, they become trapped in a cycle of continuous catch-up.

This can affect what level and quality of education they achieve throughout their time in school. It can affect their earning power as adults.

More info: <https://t.co/erpwVSuIY8> (pdf)

"59 percent of American 4-year olds – or six out of every 10 children – are not enrolled in publicly funded preschool programs through state preschool, Head Start, and special education preschool services."

"For Latino children, the unmet need is especially great. While Latinos are the fastest-growing & largest minority group in the United States, making up a quarter of 3- and 4- year olds, Latinos demonstrate the lowest preschool participation rates of any major ethnicity or race."

Sesame Street helps fill a vital need by providing our kids with a *free*, accessible education. It teaches them letters, numbers, art, music, math, basic vocabulary and social skills using characters and situations they can relate to.

It also normalizes diversity.

Not just racial diversity. Sesame Street has introduced characters over the years with physical disabilities. It has included characters who have imaginary friends and some that live in poverty. They often target an audience of poor, urban kids as well.

The disadvantaged.

Preschool programs tend to self-select attendees that have some economic advantages. Often, classes have limited diversity. That's not a knock on preschool programs. They're vital for early childhood development.

But for those who can't attend, there is Sesame Street.

Sesame Street's entire raison d'etre is to help kids who don't have the same advantages as others. Kids whose parents probably can't afford an HBO subscription. If they can even afford cable TV.

Sesame Street was never intended to be offered as an exclusive perk for parents who can afford to send their kids to preschool.

Locking new episodes behind a subscription paywall undermines its mission, hurts kids and their parents.

It will make educating kids harder.

Three generations of Americans were raised on Sesame Street. The Muppets and their human friends taught us how to read and count. They taught us how to dance, draw and sing and cope with our emotions.

They taught us to use our imaginations.

They helped make us who we are.

We should mourn this loss. Then fight it. It's culturally disastrous.

The show should not be locked up in a gated community. It's a public treasure.

The Muppets deserve defending.

More info on the profound impact Sesame Street has had on our culture and kids' education can be found in this excellent 2015 article from Alia Wong ([@aliaemily](#))

<https://t.co/oTXUpdEKj7>

If you're interested in learning how Sesame Street has been tailored to teach children more effectively, Malcolm Gladwell's *The Tipping Point* devotes an entire chapter to the subject.