

Study: Poor kids already a year behind at age 4

By Roberto A. Ferdman, Washington Post

Wealthy parents aren't just able to send their kids to top pre-schools—they can also purchase the latest learning technology and ensure their children experience as many museums, concerts and other cultural experiences as possible. Low-income parents, on the other hand, don't have that opportunity. Instead, they're often left to face the reality of sending their kids to schools without having had the chance to provide an edifying experience at home.

That might sound foreboding if not hyperbolic, but it's a serious and widespread problem in the United States, where poor kids enter school already a year behind the kids of wealthier parents. That deficit is among the largest in the developed world, and it can be extraordinarily difficult to narrow later in life.

This is one of the key takeaways from a new book about how United States is failing its children. The book, called "Too Many Children Left Behind", is written by Columbia University Professor Jane Waldfogel, a long-time researcher of poverty and inequality. And it will force almost anyone to reflect on the impact of unchecked inequality on children.

Read the whole story