

High-Quality Early Learning: A Proven Investment in School Success



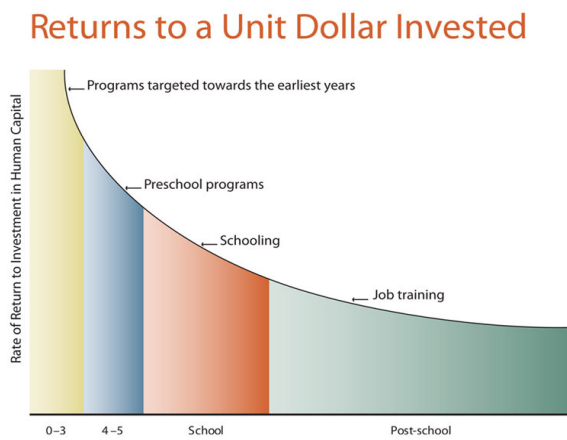
Narrowing the Achievement Gap

High-quality early childhood education is a critical component of K-12 reform, and research shows it can help close the achievement gap. By increasing access to high-quality early learning programs, the Golden State has a golden opportunity to ensure our children are ready to learn and succeed in school, compete in the global economy and contribute to thriving communities.

- Disadvantaged children, who are more likely to start school behind and stay behind, are also the least likely to attend high-quality preschool programs, according to research by the RAND Corporation.
- California's underfunded public preschool programs serve only about 40 percent of eligible 3 and 4 year olds. And just 5 percent of infants and toddlers who could attend publicly funded early childhood programs are in them.
- Only 13 percent of low-income children are enrolled in *high-quality* early learning programs that promote school readiness and later school achievement.
- Just 14 percent of Latino children are in high-quality early learning programs that prepare them for success in school. Our state's future depends on ensuring young Latino children, who account for more than half of all children under age 5, are ready to excel in school.
- Without the strong, early start that high-quality early learning provides, children may not develop the skills they need to read proficiently in third grade. This critical milestone predicts whether a student will graduate from high school.

The Economic Case for Investing in Our Future Workforce

Early childhood education is a proven long-term investment that stimulates economic growth and ensures future prosperity. And right now, every dollar put toward early childhood education is both an educational and economic stimulus for American families – creating jobs and enabling parents to earn while their children learn. Economists have found that high-quality early childhood education offers one of the highest returns of any public investment -- more than \$7 for every dollar spent.



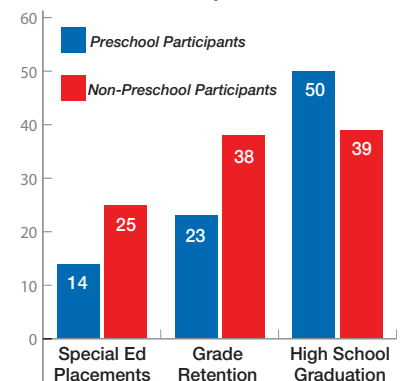
Source: Heckman and LaFontaine (2007).

Providing the Building Blocks for Future Achievement

The good news is that we know how to dramatically boost our children's chances for success. Neuroscientists have found early experiences – particularly from birth to age five – shape whether their brains develop a strong foundation for the learning and behavior that follow.

- Early learning programs help kids develop social skills such as cooperating, making friends and accepting new responsibilities.
- Early childhood education builds important pre-literacy and early math skills and fosters children's love of learning by encouraging exploration.
- Children in a longitudinal study who had attended preschool were less likely to drop out of high school, be placed in special education and held back a grade, and they scored better on reading and math achievement tests.

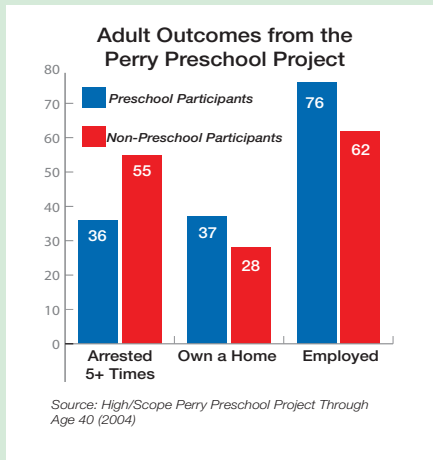
**Chicago Child Parent Center
Preschool Participants Fare Better**



Source: Long-term Effects of an Early Childhood Intervention on Educational Achievement and Juvenile Arrest (2001)

Laying a Strong Foundation for Learning

Providing the Building Blocks for Future Achievement



- The benefits continued into adulthood. By age 18, children not in preschool were 70 percent more likely to commit violent crimes. By age 40, study participants who had attended preschool were also more likely to own a home and be employed.

“This is a unique moment in time when early learning... has come into its own and is recognized as the first and most critical stage in human development... We have a special opportunity to build a bigger, better coordinated system of early care and education. It is time to transform early learning from a system of uneven quality and access into a system that truly and consistently prepares children for success in school and in life.”

— Secretary of Education Arne Duncan

- Early childhood education saves government spending on K-12 education, public assistance and the criminal justice system, and increases tax revenues as a result of higher earnings.

- The U.S. is already falling behind other countries, and California is also lagging behind other states. In a globally competitive workplace, we can no longer allow our children to enter school unprepared to learn and succeed.

- Early care and education is a major industry in its own right. At a time when job creation is a top priority, it provides tens of thousands of jobs in communities across California. In Los Angeles, for example, the early care and education industry generates \$1.9 billion in gross receipts and creates more than 65,000 full-time equivalent jobs.

What's Ahead in California

Continuing budget deficits mean California's preschool and early education programs are at risk for significant cuts. We must maintain these investments while also maximizing California's share of new federal early learning investments, doing more and better with existing early learning resources and preparing more children to succeed in school.

- California must build on its progress in making our state competitive for new federal early learning funds, and advocate for including early learning programs within education reform. We have already launched a process to create a statewide Early Learning Quality Rating System to raise quality, improve accountability and better prepare children to succeed in school as a result of SB 1629-Steinberg (2008).

- This effort is led by the California Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC), which will coordinate this state's work and investments in early learning. The ELAC builds on the work of the Early Learning Quality Improvement System (ELQIS) committee, which was established by SB-1629 (Steinberg) to improve the quality of early care and education programs.

- The Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010, a historic reform to kindergarten education, gives California an unparalleled opportunity to ensure that 120,000 more children each year are better prepared to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. The legislation creates

transitional kindergarten (TK), the first year of a two-year kindergarten experience for those students who are born between September and December. It also changes the kindergarten entry date from Dec. 2 to Sept. 1, so children enter kindergarten at age 5.

- Reducing state resources for our already underfunded early learning system would undermine current work to improve the quality of our child development system, and with it, our efforts to better prepare children to succeed in school. Furthermore, California must maintain its programs in order to improve the quality of our child development system and compete for millions in potential federal funds for early learning.

Join us in preparing our youngest learners to compete in the global economy, fueling long-term economic growth and ushering in a new era of prosperity for our next generation by increasing access to high-quality early childhood education.

Sources for all research cited in this document are available at www.preschoolcalifornia.org/

For more information, visit www.preschoolcalifornia.org



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