



**Q: WHY DOES INVESTMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PAY OFF?**

**A: 85 percent of brain development occurs by age 5.**

- At birth, most neurons the brain will have are present. By age 2, the brain is 80 percent of its adult size.
- Every experience excites neural circuits. Neglect impedes brain development.
- Meaningful differences in performance between advantaged and disadvantaged children show up as early as 9 months old.
- Children from low income families enter kindergarten with a listening vocabulary of 3000 words compared to 20,000 words from middle income children.
- Intervening at an early enough age can raise IQ. (At age 3, children from the most vocabulary-rich families scored approximately 25 pts. higher on IQ tests.)

**A: By the age of five, we can predict which children will succeed.**

- Of 50 first-graders with trouble reading, 44 will still have trouble in fourth grade.
- Longitudinal studies over 40 years (including Abecedarian, Perry and Chicago Child Parent Center) show that low-income children who participated in quality early childhood programs had increased test scores, decreased rates of being held back in school and decreased placement in special education.
- Children who participated in the Allegheny County, PA, preschool program were shown to have special education and grade retention rates of 1 and 2 percent respectively, compared to 21 and 23 percent rates for non-participants of similar backgrounds.
- In the longer term, studies also find increased graduation and decreased crime and delinquency rates. The Perry preschool study found that children who did not participate were five times more likely to have multiple arrests by age 27.

**A: Investment in quality early learning benefits families.**

- Between 1979 and 2004, the number of children speaking a language other than English at home nearly tripled from 3.8 million to 10 million (one out of five children have immigrant parents). Children with low levels of English proficiency have difficulty communicating with teachers and peers, as well as difficulty with reading and comprehension in school. If reading difficulties persist to third grade, it predicts high drop-out rates and low college attendance.
- High quality preschool has been proven to increase parent-child interaction, especially with fathers, and to increase parental interaction with schools.

**A: Investment in quality early learning benefits communities.**

- The quality of early education can be tied to future incarceration rates. Several states use the number of third graders who can't read as a proxy for the number of prison beds that will be needed in 10 to 15 years.
- Longitudinal studies show that quality early care programs return \$7 for every \$1 invested, based on the reduced cost of remedial education and justice system expenditures, and on increased earnings and tax revenues.
- The Economic Policy Institute study found that widespread implementation of high quality preschool would result in savings of \$155 billion to government, society and individuals from reduced crime.

**A: Investing in early learning is the right thing to do for all children.**

- Quality pre-school benefits all children, not only low-income children. Eighty percent of families making \$100,000 or more a year enroll a child in pre-school. Of families making \$75,000 a year, 70 percent enroll a child in pre-school. Only 50 percent of families making \$30,000 to \$75,000 enroll children in pre-school, but those same middle income families experience a high school drop-out rate of 1 in 10 and 12 percent of middle-income students will repeat a grade.
- These are our children. When it comes to brain development, there are no do-overs.