



LEADERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY UNDERSTAND THE VALUE OF INVESTING IN THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF A CHILD'S LIFE

GOVERNORS SPEAK OUT

Arizona

"We need to be talking about preschool through secondary school. You don't just snap your finger and expect that to happen. There can be no cuts to education, not a dime."

--Governor Janet Napolitano (AZ)

Illinois

"Even during these difficult budget times, we've provided more funding for early childhood education because we know that access to a quality preschool program can directly improve a child's chances at long-term success."

--Illinois Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich

Iowa

"Brain research has established and proved that 85 percent of the core structure of the brain of a child forms in the first six years of life. To fulfill our collective responsibility to our children, we must have a comprehensive commitment to these young learners. We must have a commitment that coordinates and integrates early child care and education."

--Gov. Tom Vilsack (D)-IA State of State 01/11/05

Michigan

"Children learn more from birth to age 3 than any other time in life. During these years, what we do will affect the way they learn, think and behave forever,"

--Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm

Minnesota

"The pre-kindergarten years are a critical part of determining a child's educational success. Our state already makes a significant investment in early childhood programs. Today we are committing to ensure that money is well spent and funding programs that add value to getting our children ready for school. We know that doing so can have strong, long-term positive impacts."

--Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty

New Mexico

"Kids who have access to pre-kindergarten have a better chance to succeed in school, get into college and get a good-paying job later in life. However, we also know that too many of our children begin school under-prepared. Instead of a head start in life, they're too often already a step behind. The achievement gap in our schools exists for many kids before they even start kindergarten."

--New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson, in his State of the State Address.

Oregon

"We can't just look at one piece of it. When we talk about education, the whole system has to rise."

--Governor Ted Kulongoski (OR)

Tennessee

"Educators on the front lines see it most clearly. I've spoken with kindergarten teachers who say they know on the first day of school which children have attended preschool and which haven't."

--Phil Bredesen, Governor (TN)

Texas

"By the time they reach the school classroom, early start children are prepared to succeed in reading and writing and in math. A child prepared early is more likely to succeed later."

--Governor Rick Perry (TX)

Virginia

"Research and data shows strong pre-K programs for kids at early ages really produces a high likelihood of educational success."

--Virginia Governor-elect Tim Kaine

POLICYMAKERS SPEAK OUT

"Research shows that quality child care can help a child's development in a rich variety of areas, including language, social skills, relationships with teachers and peers, self-perception, and, ultimately, school-readiness. Many working parents rely on these child care programs, and children rely on them to prepare for future success in school. What's more, quality Head Start, public pre-kindergarten, and for-profit and non-profit child care programs provide a positive long-term economic development impact by allowing parents to re-enter the workforce with the knowledge that their children are prepared for school. All of this is accomplished by the TEEM model, which expands quality, research-based early childhood education services in our community."

-- Texas Senator Judith Zaffirini, author of Senate Bill 76 (2003), which established the Texas Early Childhood Education Model (TEEM), and of Senate Bill 23 (2005), which provided significant funding for it.

"Making the children of military service members, Guard and Reserve eligible for Pre-K is something states can provide with little difficulty in demonstration of our gratitude.

The economic implications are nominal, when weighed against the educational advantages children will receive and investing in school readiness reaps life-long benefits for our citizens."

--Texas Senator Leticia Van de Putte

"As our economy grows and more parents enter the workforce, the need for early childhood development will also grow as an increasingly important public policy issue. When more mothers and fathers move, by necessity or choice, from the home to the workforce, the need for early childhood education becomes more critical. The earlier a child begins to learn, the more likely it is that that young person will stay in school."

--Texas State Representative Lois W. Kolkhorst

"Working families -- and the communities who depend upon them -- must have access to high quality child care. Community leaders, taxpayers and businesses must demand a system that supports affordable options for working families; adheres to standards parents and educators can count upon; and prepares children for school."

--Texas State Representative Michael Villarreal

"I was very pleased to be one of the authors of the bill that led to legislation making military children eligible for Pre-K enrollment. Texas has made a lot of progress in pre-kindergarten programs but we still have a way to go. I would like to see even more families have the opportunity to send their 4-year-olds to Pre-K classes."

--Texas State Representative Dennis Bonnen

"Investing in pre-K education should be a no-brainer for any politician, Democrat or Republican. An early investment in the youngest Texans is the best investment we can make as a state. The evidence is clear: By investing in pre-K, not only do we save tax dollars on incarceration and entitlement programs, but we also prepare our future work force for the challenges of the global economy."

--Texas State Representative Mark Strama

"The response to military families enrolling their children in pre-k is astounding. Ultimately, this will further efforts to open eligibility to early education to all Texas families. Education should not be a privilege, but a right for every Texas child."

--Texas State Representative Veronica Gonzales

"Too many of the problems in public education are a result of children entering school unprepared to succeed. We must invest in programs that have been proven to lead to school success, reduce criminal justice costs, and strengthen the Texas economy. This includes increasing access to public pre-kindergarten programs."

--Texas State Representative Joe Straus

"We must not forget what our future is - our children. Head Start and Pre-K for military families is just the first step, we must continue to work for a quality education to be accessible even at the earliest years."

--Texas State Representative Gene Seaman

"Early childhood education is an investment that pays unlimited dividends to our society. We should take the opportunity now to prepare children for a lifetime of achievement and health during their early formative years. Early childhood education unlocks the potential of individuals -- and an entire generation."

-- Texas State Representative Carlos I. Uresti

"Too many children enter kindergarten unprepared. We cannot let our children fall behind at an early age. Early childhood education paves the way to a lifetime of learning."

--Michigan State Representative Lisa Wojno

"One of the striking findings in early education is the size of the achievement gap at the start of kindergarten between children who have gone to preschool and those who have not. That difference hardly ever goes away. It continues in reading and math achievement in the early grades and throughout school and into the job market."

--Arkansas State Representative Leroy Dangeau

"If we are to reduce the dropout rate, it is critical that we invest more resources at the beginning of a child's education..."

--John J. Day, Member of the Indiana House of Representatives

SUPERINTENDENTS SPEAK OUT

"You want kids coming to school prepared to begin the learning process. With that early start, we're not having kids having difficulty with their reading."

--Carl Harris, Deputy Superintendent of Durham Public Schools comments on importance of early education to school readiness

"Preschool is an important step toward improving our K-12 schools. When all California children have the chance to lay a strong foundation for success, our schools will benefit, our economy will benefit, and so will we all."

--Jack O'Connell, California Superintendent of Public Instruction

"With good, strong pre-k programs, those youngsters do better as they progress through the elementary years than those who don't. There's no question about that."

--Dr. Robert DiFlorio, the interim Syracuse School Superintendent.

"Student achievement data is demonstrating the effectiveness of a high quality preschool in preparing students to enter kindergarten ready to learn and to ultimately attain long-term achievement and graduation."

--Dick Christie, Superintendent of Council Bluffs Community School District (IA)

BUSINESS LEADERS SPEAK OUT

“Here in Texas, the business community is a growing voice of support, viewing early childhood education and development as a public investment. Business leaders recognize the direct connection between early childhood education and a sustainable, productive workforce ready to shape the future of Texas.”

--Sandy Dochen, Manager in Corporate Community Relations for IBM

"In the end, the payoff for Iowa investing in quality early childhood education is a more productive employee, more dedicated citizen and an adult who functions in society, misses work less frequently, gets involved with the community in charitable activities, supports the local tax base."

--Max Phillips, Qwest president and chairman of the Iowa business council

"Studies reveal that children who have participated in quality early education programs are 30 percent more likely to graduate from high school than those who have not -- these kids are our future work force."

--Carol J. Barnett of Lakeland is president of Publix Super Markets Charities

COMMUNITY LEADERS SPEAK OUT

“Access to high quality preschool programs including child care, Head Start and pre-kindergarten could be the single most effective mechanism to improve the outcomes of our state's public schools.”

--Dr. Alvin Tarlov, retired executive director of the Texas Program for Society and Health at the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy at Rice University

"The research is clear, quality pre-kindergarten programs like Head Start for at-risk children are shown to be among our most effective tools in reducing future crime and violence and saving taxpayer dollars."

--Bruce R. Clash, Pennsylvania State Director, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids

"I cannot think of a better place to begin than making sure that every Latino and Latina child starts school with a solid foundation in reading. Research shows that literacy is a fundamental building block for educational success. Most of those who cannot read early in life never catch up. Because many Hispanic children come from backgrounds that result in little or no exposure to the written English word, Latinos more than any other group stand to benefit from early reading programs."

--Janet Murguia, president and CEO of the National Council of La Raza, speaks on the importance of early childhood education to the Latino community.

"Like kindergarten before it, preschool education is a concept whose time has come. One who has studied preschool education in the context of global competitiveness is Nobel

Prize-winning economist James Heckman. When it comes to investing in early childhood education, he says it best: "We can't afford not to."

--W. Steven Barnett, Ph.D., National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers University

"When we invest more funds into the early education of the community's people, we see a higher percentage of educated persons, who ultimately earn a higher wage, giving that community a higher percentage of income...Through studies, we have learned that 85 percent - 90 percent of the brain development is completed by age five. The earlier we begin educating our children, the greater chance they have of succeeding in school and college, and of making a greater impact on our community."

--Rob Grunewald, Regional Analyst, Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank