



QUESTIONS TO ASK CANDIDATES

If elected, how would you support increased access to quality pre-k programs, including Child Care, federal Head Start, and Public Pre-kindergarten?

If elected, would you support increased funding for voluntary pre-k programs in Texas?

BACKGROUND:

Investing in voluntary pre-kindergarten is a sound economic development plan for the future of Texas. Study after study unambiguously demonstrates that the first five years of a child's life are critical to **brain development** as they are important for the growth of language, critical thinking, and social skills. The Federal Reserve Bank and other economists contend that no public investment provides a greater return than the support of early childhood education and development. While projections of the long-term **returns on investment** for pre-k programs are clear and convincing, equally compelling research exists linking pre-k programs to more immediate reduced state expenditures for remedial education and unnecessary referrals to special education programs. Education is the key to economic development and quality pre-k programs are the key to **educational success** for all children, particularly those living in poverty. Quality pre-k programs including **Child Care, federal Head Start and Public Pre-kindergarten** play an essential role in ensuring that children develop to their full potential, enter school ready to succeed, and stay safe while their parents are at work.

- Children who participated in high quality pre-k programs are less frequently assigned to special education classes or retained in grade in later years; have better school attendance rates and lower school dropout rates; show greater motivation for learning and commitment to schooling; excel in mastery of pre-reading, reading and math skills, and **are better prepared for school**ⁱ
- Every **\$1 invested** in quality pre-k **saves between \$7 and \$17** by increasing the likelihood that children will be literate, employed and enrolled in postsecondary education and less likely to be school dropouts, dependent on welfare, or arrested for criminal activityⁱⁱ
- It is estimated by 2040, **30% of the labor force** in Texas will **not have a high school diploma**ⁱⁱⁱ

If elected, how would you support community-based organizations serving infants and toddlers?

BACKGROUND:

Research shows that brain development during the early years occurs at a faster rate than any other subsequent period and as a result set the foundation for later success in school and life. Due to the unique needs of infants and toddlers, it is the quality of care, and in particular, the quality of daily interactions between early childhood providers and babies and toddlers that most significantly impacts development.^{iv}

- For every public dollar invested in a school age child in Texas, less than 7 cents is spent on the education and development of an infant or toddler ages birth through two years^v
- More than half of Texas women with children under the age of three are in the labor force^{vi}
- In Texas, 33% of all the requests for child care to the child care resource and referral programs were for infant and toddler care^{vii}

ⁱ National Association for the Education of Young Children “What are the benefits of high quality early childhood programs?” 2001.

ⁱⁱ W.S. Barnett, “Cost Benefit Analysis,” in L.J. Schweinhart, H.V. Barnes, and D.P. Weikart, Significant Benefits: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 27; summary at <http://www.highscope.org/Research/PerryProject/perryfact.htm> and their latest data tracking children through age 40 at <http://www.highscope.org/NewsandInformation/PressReleases/PerryP-Age40.htm>

ⁱⁱⁱ The Population of Texas: Historical Patterns and Future Trends Affecting Education by Steve H. Murdock, Institute for Demographic and Socioeconomic Research College of Business, The University of Texas at San Antonio <http://txsdc.tamu.edu>

^{iv} Shonkoff J., and Phillips, D. (Eds.) (2000). National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

^v Early Learning Left Out: Investments by Child Age on Education and Development. Released by The Child and Family Policy Center and Voices for America’s Children. April 2005.

^{vi} National Infant and Toddler Child Care Initiative, a project of the US Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families Child Care Bureau, July 14, 2005

<http://www.nccic.org/itcc/PDFdocs/TexasFINAL.pdf>

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