FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS
COUNCIL FOR A STRONG AMERICA
MAINE

BRIEF



We Are the Ones You Pay Later

Maine law enforcement leaders urge policymakers to cut crime by investing in high-quality early care and education

Maine sheriffs and police chiefs have an important message for everyone who cares about the costly impact of crime: Maine's jails are full of people serving time for serious and costly crimes. But it doesn't have to be that way. Providing at-risk kids with high-quality early learning opportunities through pre-K, Head Start, and child care programs can reduce the human and fiscal costs of crime in the future.

As law enforcement leaders, our number one priority is protecting the safety of our communities. We do this by arresting, prosecuting and, when necessary, incarcerating people who commit crimes. But, ultimately, our best opportunity to improve public safety is to keep people from becoming involved in crime in the first place. Maine spends over $210 million a year on corrections, but spending money on high-quality early care and education (ECE) would reduce those long-term costs.[1] The choice is simple: Pay for high-quality ECE programs now, or pay far more later for the costs of crime.

"Many kids are starting school too far behind and never catching up. If we want less crime in our state, we should invest upfront in early learning opportunities, rather than paying the high cost of school failure."

— Troy Morton, Sheriff, Penobscot County, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids



The path we set children upon, in their earliest years, can make a huge difference. Research has shown that high-quality early education and care from birth through pre-kindergarten will result in more successful outcomes:

Fewer behavior problems: Students who participated in Alabama's First Class Pre-K program were about half as likely to have a behavioral infraction in grades 1 to 12 as students who did not receive pre-K.[2] A study that examined families in which one sibling attended Head Start and another did not, found Head Start reduced incidence of behavioral problems at ages 12 and 13.[13] A longitudinal study of more than 1,300 children found that children in higher-quality child care had significantly lower levels of behavior problems at age 15 compared to children in lower-quality child care.[4]

Better academic outcomes: Improvements in literacy and reading comprehension: Georgia's Pre-K Program attendees had significantly better scores than their peers who did not attend any pre-k program on literacy and reading comprehension scores.[5]

- **Improvements in math:** At-risk four-year-olds who attended Maine's Public Preschool Program (PPP) scored higher on math assessments in the third and fourth grades when compared to their peers who did not attend preschool.[6]
- **Less special education:** New Jersey, which has followed its state preschool children through tenth grade, found that the children served were seven percent less likely to be placed in special education than a control group.[7]
- **Not held back in school:** Participants in Michigan's state pre-K were held back in

school 51 percent less often than non-participants.[8] New Jersey's pre-K program found its children were retained 15 percent less often than non-participants.[9]

Fewer dropouts: The Chicago Child-Parent Center program, an early learning program that has served over 100,000 children, reported a 29 percent increase in high school graduation rates by age 20 among its participants.[10] Meanwhile, Michigan's pre-K program reported a 35 percent increase in graduates.[11] A study analysis of Head Start found that siblings who attended the program had an increased probability of graduating from high school, compared to their siblings who did not attend.[12] Moreover, six out of 10 prisoners nationwide do not have a high school diploma, demonstrating the importance of educational attainment for crime prevention.[13]

Less crime and fewer prisoners: Children not served by the Chicago CPC program were 70 percent more likely to be arrested for a violent crime by age 18.[14] By age 24, the people served by the CPC were 20 percent less likely to have served time in a jail or prison.[15] A recent MIT study of the Boston preschool program found that enrollees were less likely to have been incarcerated in a juvenile facility during high school, compared to non-enrollees.[16]

Reduced child welfare involvement: Children who have been placed in foster care are at greater risk for criminal involvement in young adulthood.[17] High-quality ECE programs can help prevent child maltreatment through reducing parental stress, linking families to services, providing nurturing and enriching learning environments, and effectively reporting suspected abuse. A study of the CPC found that the program cut child abuse and neglect in half for the children served, compared with similar children from families that did not participate.[18]

Conclusion

As law enforcement leaders, our job is to put those who commit serious crimes behind bars. **But we *all* agree that a better and less expensive way to stop crime going forward is to prevent as many young children as possible from growing up to become involved in crime in the first place.** When we support what works for children, we put them—and our state—on a different, safer path. High-quality child care, Head Start, and state pre-K programs are critical to ensuring our kids get the best start possible. We urge state and federal policymakers to invest in early care and education programs as a matter of public safety.



Endnotes

1 U.S. Department of Corrections. National Institute of Corrections. (2020). Maine 2020. https://nicic.gov/state-statistics/2020/maine-2020

2 Adams, J., Becker, D., Ernest, J., et. al. (2019, July) Disciplinary infractions in Alabama public schools: First-Class Pre-K students have lower discipline rates. https://children.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/7_Discipline_7-2019.pdf

3 Carneiro, P., & Ginja, R. (2014). Long-term impacts of compensatory preschool on health and behavior: Evidence from Head Start. American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, 6(4), 135–173. https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/pol.6.4.135

4 Vandell, D. L., Belsky, J., Burchinal, M., et al. (2010). Do effects of early child care extend to age 15 years? Results from the NICHD Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development. Child Development, 81, 737-756. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20573102/

5 Soliday Hong, S., Zadrozny, S., Walker, J., Love, E.N.G., Osborne, J.D., Owen, J. L., Jenkins, G., & Peisner-Feinberg, E. (2021). Longitudinal study of Georgia's pre-K program: Third grade report. https://www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/GAPreKEvalLongitudinalYr5Report.pdf

6 Application for Grants Under the Preschool Development-Expansion. https://www2.ed.gov/programs/preschooldevelopmentgrants/applications/meapplicationpdg2015.pdf

7 National Institutes of Early Education Research. (2021). New Jersey Abbott Preschool Program longitudinal effects study through grade 10 (APPLES-10). https://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Abbott_Fact_Sheet.pdf

8 Schweinhart, L. , Xiang, Z., Daniel-Echols, M., Browning, K., & Wakabayashi, T. (2012). Michigan Great Start Readiness Program evaluation 2012: High school graduation and grade retention findings. https://highscope.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/gsrp-2012-report.pdf

9 National Institutes of Early Education Research. (2021). New Jersey Abbott Preschool Program longitudinal effects study through grade 10 (APPLES-10). https://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Abbott_Fact_Sheet.pdf

10 Reynolds, A., Temple, J., Robertson, D., & Mann, E. (2001). Long-term effects of an early childhood intervention on educational achievement and juvenile arrest A 15-year follow-up of low-income children in public schools. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11343481

11 Schweinhart, L. , Xiang, Z., Daniel-Echols, M., Browning, K., & Wakabayashi, T. (2012). Michigan Great Start Readiness Program evaluation 2012: High school graduation and grade retention findings. https://highscope.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/gsrp-2012-report.pdf

12 Bauer, L. & Schanzenbach, D. (2016). The long-term impact of the Head Start program. http://www.hamiltonproject.org/papers/the_long_term_impacts_of_head_start?_ga=2.144487420.817796656.1543948677-271592620.1543501156

13 Educational Characteristics of Prisoners: Data from the ACES Working Paper. U.S. Census Bureau. https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2011/demo/ewert-wildhagen-prisoner-education-4-6-11.pdf

14 Reynolds, A., Temple, J., Robertson, D., & Mann, E. (2001). Long-term effects of an early childhood intervention on educational achievement and juvenile arrest A 15-year follow-up of low-income children in public schools. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11343481

15 Reynolds, A., & Ou, S. (2011). Paths of effects from preschool to adult well-being: A confirmatory analysis of the Child-Parent Center program. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3793348/

16 Gray-Lobe, G., Pathak, P., & Walters, C. (2021, May). The long-term effects of universal preschool in Boston. https://blueprintcdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Blueprint-Labs-Discussion-Paper-2021.4-Gray-Lobe-Pathak-and-Walters.pdf

17 Mark E. Courtney et al., (2011). Midwest evaluation of the adult functioning of former foster youth: Outcomes at age 26. https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/Midwest-Eval-Outcomes-at-Age-26.pdf

18 Reynolds, A., Temple, J., Ou, S., Robertson, D., Mersky, J.., Topitzes, J., & Niles, M. (2007). Effects of a school-based, early childhood intervention on adult health and well-being: a 19-year follow-up of low-income families. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17679653

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids
Thousands of police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors and violence survivors protecting public safety by promoting solutions that steer kids away from crime.

Council for a Strong America is a national, bipartisan nonprofit that unites membership organizations, including law enforcement leaders, retired admirals and generals, and business executives, that promote solutions ensuring that our next generation of Americans will be successful, productive members of society.

4 Jersey Circle / Topsham, ME 04086 / 207.725.5946

COUNCIL FOR A
STRONG AMERICA

StrongNation.org