MISSION: READINESS
COUNCIL FOR A STRONG AMERICA
INDIANA

FACTSHEET

Early Learning: A National Security Imperative

How high-quality pre-K can help more young adults qualify for military service

72 percent of today's young adults in Indiana cannot join the military. As military leaders look ahead to the coming years, they are increasingly concerned that there are not enough qualified candidates to defend our nation. This concern stems from problems including education, obesity, crime and drug abuse that render many young adults ineligible for military service.[1]

If we do not address such problems early on in children's lives, the nation risks a shortage of qualified recruits—one that will leave the country vulnerable for years to come and threaten the strength of the future military.

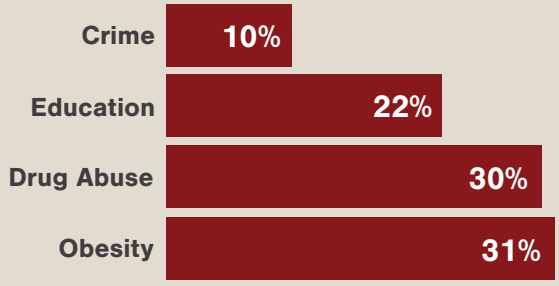
High-quality pre-K can help children succeed

Mounting research shows that the early years of life are incredibly important for later learning, behaviors and health.[2] Studies show that high-quality pre-K helps children:

Do well in school: High-quality pre-K can improve children's early math and literacy skills, putting them three to nine months ahead in elementary school compared to their peers who did not attend pre-K.[3] Some high-quality programs even boost high school graduation rates by 30 to 50 percent.[4]

Common Barriers to Military Service

US Population of Young Adults Ages 17-24



Note: Young Adults can be counted in more than one category.

Achieve a healthy weight: Pre-K programs that emphasize healthy eating, physical activity and parent engagement can help lower child obesity rates by five to 24 percent.[5]

Stay on the right side of the law: Studies of two high-quality pre-K programs found that participating children were less likely to have criminal records as adults.[6]

These benefits play into one another. For example, better education can help improve health and vice versa. As such, high-quality pre-K is an important step toward establishing a culture of health across America.

Policymakers should continue the movement toward high-quality pre-K

Over the past few years, high-quality pre-K has gained traction across the U.S. In the 2015-16 state budget year, 32 states—22 with Republican governors and 10 with Democratic governors—increased funding for pre-K.[7]

However, 54 percent of the nation's three- and four-year-olds still do not attend pre-K, let alone a high-quality program.[8] In Indiana, the situation is worse, with 60 percent of young children not enrolled in pre-K. Policymakers at the state and national levels should continue to expand high-quality early education to ensure that all children are prepared in mind, body and character to succeed at whatever career they choose, including military service.

60%

of three- and four-year-olds in Indiana still do not attend high-quality pre-K.

1 According to the 2013 Qualified Military Available (QMA), based on personal communication with the Accession Policy and Joint Advertising, Market Research and Studies teams at the Department of Defense in July 2014.

2 Harvard University Center on the Developing Child (n.d.) "Key Concepts: Brain Architecture."

3 Ladd, H. F., et al. (2012). Early childhood initiatives and third grade outcomes in North Carolina. Barnett, W. S., et al (2013). Abbott Preschool Program longitudinal effects study: Fifth grade follow-up.

4 Reynolds, A. J., et al. (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. JAMA, 285, 2339-2346; Michigan Great Start Readiness Program evaluation 2012: High school graduation and grade retention findings. Schweinhart, L.J., et al. (2005). Lifetime effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool study through age 40. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press

5 NYC DHMH, 2012: http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/cdp/cdp_pan_staff-home.shtml; CDC, 2011: http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6049a1.htm; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2012: www.rwjf.org/healthpolicy; Robbins, J.M. et al., 2012: http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2012/12_0118.htm; Kolbo, J.R., et al. (2012): http://www.southernobesitysummit.org/uploads/1/4/5/7/14570646/jerome_kolbo.pdf

6 Reynolds, A. J., et al. (2001). Long-term effects of an early childhood intervention on educational achievement and juvenile arrest. JAMA, 285, 2339-2380; Schweinhart, L. J., et al. (1993). Significant benefits: The High/Scope Perry Preschool study through age 27.

7 Education Commission of the States (2016). http://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/01252016_Prek-K_Funding_report-4.pdf

8 KIDS COUNT Data Center analysis of U.S. Census data, 2011-13 three-year American Community Survey.

Mission: Readiness
Retired admirals and generals strengthening national security by ensuring kids stay in school, stay fit, and stay out of trouble

Council for a Strong America is a national, bipartisan nonprofit that unites five organizations comprised of law enforcement leaders, retired admirals and generals, business executives, pastors, and prominent coaches and athletes who promote solutions that ensure our next generation of Americans will be citizen-ready.

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