READY NATION
COUNCIL FOR A STRONG AMERICA

FACTSHEET

High-Quality Early Care and Education Helps Build a Strong Workforce

Businesses have always needed workers proficient in the "3 Rs"—reading, writing, and arithmetic—but today's fast-paced marketplace requires even higher proficiency levels of these basic skills, as well as the social-emotional skills, needed to think critically, work collaboratively, and persevere through challenges. Yet businesses are hard-pressed to find workers that meet these needs.

Problems arise early: At kindergarten entry, disadvantaged children can already be much as 18 months behind their peers in skills development.[1] In fact, 60 to 70 percent of the achievement gap in high school is already present on the first day of kindergarten.[2] Many of these children never catch up and, as a result, they are more likely to become high-school dropouts.[3]

Fortunately, there is a solution: High-quality early care and education can help prepare children for their immediate future *and* their adult lives. High-quality early care and education is essential for ensuring children don't arrive at kindergarten already behind. Quality early learning can help children succeed in school so they can become a part of the effective workforce our country needs to be competitive in the global marketplace.

Federal policymakers must continue to invest in high-quality early care and education to ensure our nation's future economic success.

Benefits of Quality Early Care and Education

- Children who attended New Jersey's preschool program were three-fourths of a year ahead in math and two-thirds of a year ahead in reading by the 4th and 5th grades, compared to similar children who did not participate.[4]

> **"Supporting quality early childhood programs is the best investment we can make to strengthen our future economy and our nation."**



— Ray Potts,
Former President and CEO,
Potts Exploration LLC

- Participants in the Tulsa, Oklahoma Head Start program had higher state test scores in math in 7th grade and were 31 percent less likely to be held back by 8th grade.[5]
- Children who participated in Michigan's state preschool program had a 35 percent increase in high school graduation rates.[6]
- Participants in the Abecedarian Project, who received child care in infancy followed by preschool, were four times more likely to graduate from a four-year college and 42 percent more likely to be employed consistently as adults.[7]

Early care and education has a strong return on investment

An independent cost-benefit analysis of state and local preschool programs found that they can have, on average, a net return of more than $29,000 for every child served, in the long run.[8] In the short term, roughly $2 in local spending is generated for every dollar spent on child care programs.[9]

Invest in early education to strengthen our economy

An investment in early care and education is a solid investment in our nation's ability to compete. Congress must continue to prioritize investments in Head Start, the Child Care and Development Block Grant and Preschool Development Grants.

1 http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/2009-52DisparitiesELExecSumm.pdf

2 https://www.russellsage.org/publications/too-many-children-left-behind

3 http://nieer-www1.rutgers.edu/resources/research/FragileLives.pdf

4 http://nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/APPLES%205th%20Grade.pdf

5 http://captulsa.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/CROCUSPolicyBriefAugust2016.pdf

6 http://bridgemi.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/GSRP-evaluation-may-21-12.pdf

7 http://fpg.unc.edu/node/4083

8 http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/BenefitCost/ProgramPdf/270/State-and-district-early-childhood-education-programs

9 http://s3.amazonaws.com/mildredwarner.org/attachments/000/000/078/original/159-da4e7e93.pdf

ReadyNation: Business. Kids. Workforce.
Business executives building a skilled workforce by promoting solutions that prepare children to succeed in education, work, and life

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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