CHAMPIONS FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE
COUNCIL FOR A STRONG AMERICA

FACTSHEET

High-Quality Early Care and Education Can Help Kids Compete in Life

In contrast to our nation's finish atop the medal count at the 2016 Olympics, America's 15-year-olds finished 25th in science and 40th in math out of the 72 countries taking the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD] exam in 2015.[1] Obstacles to academic success appear early in life: 60 percent of the achievement gap in reading and 70 percent of the achievement gap in math between low-income and higher-income children 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]

As champion athletes, we want to see all children achieve their full potential and become champions in life. The good news is that we know high-quality early care and education can dramatically improve the chances of success for children who are disadvantaged by teaching them pre-math, pre-reading, and important social-emotional skills. Federal policymakers must continue to invest in high-quality early care and education to ensure more American children achieve success in school and beyond.



"How can little kids succeed if they start the race already 10 steps behind?"



— April Holmes, Paralympic Gold Medalist (Track & Field)

High-quality early care and education can change the odds of success for children

- By the 4th and 5th grades, children who attended a preschool program in New Jersey were three-fourths of a year ahead in math and two-thirds of a year ahead in literacy, compared to similar non-participants. They were also less likely to be held back in school.[4]
- Michigan's state preschool program resulted in a 35 percent increase in the high-school graduation rate among participants.[5]
- After attending the Tulsa, Oklahoma Head Start program, participants had higher state test scores in math in 7th grade and were 31 percent less likely to be held back by 8th grade.[6]
- The Abecedarian Project provided children with child care in infancy, followed by preschool. Participants were four times more likely to graduate from college and 42 percent more likely to be employed consistently as adults.[7]

High-quality early education can save millions

An independent cost-benefit analysis of state and local preschool programs showed that they can return over $29,000 in average, net benefits to society for every child served.[8]

Conclusion

Making high-quality early care and education available to disadvantaged children is essential for America's future generations to succeed and help our nation prosper. Congress must continue to prioritize investments in Head Start, the Child Care and Development Block Grant and Preschool Development Grants.

1 https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2015-results-in-focus.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://bridgemi.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/GSRP-evaluation-may-21-12.pdf

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

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

8 http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/BenefitCost/Program/270

Champions for America's Future
Athletes and coaches promoting policy solutions for at-risk kids to compete in 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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