

Savings Now, Savings Later

Smart Early Childhood Programs Pay Off Right Away and in the Future

Abundant evidence has shown that high-quality early childhood programs generate enormous long-term benefits for young people as they grow to become productive adults, for our economy and for society.

But we don't have to wait 10 or 20 years to see strong returns on our investments in young children. Some programs create real savings in a year or less. Early education also improves third-grade scores, and children who do not read well by the end of third grade are four times more likely to drop out.¹ This brief documents three kinds of programs that have both near-term and sustained impact.

Quality home visiting/parent mentoring programs can reduce costs and improve outcomes now

- High-quality programs in which trained, professional mentors support at-risk, expectant and new parents can improve mothers' health during pregnancy and delay potentially costly second births.²
- By reducing child abuse and neglect by up to half and even preventing child deaths, programs such as the Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) and Healthy Families America can save states some of the \$33 billion in annual medical, legal and other costs associated with abuse and neglect.³
- Toddlers who participated in NFP had 78% fewer days hospitalized and 23% fewer health care visits for injuries and poisonings than their peers.⁴ Through these and other savings, NFP has average net savings of almost \$17,000 per family.⁵

- Mothers in Early Head Start saw a \$300 increase in their earnings per month, while parents in NFP relied on welfare benefits for \$1,000 less per year compared to similar families not in the program.⁶
- Two years after 18 South Carolina counties were randomly assigned to implement Triple P, a parent education program, they experienced a quarter fewer abuse and neglect cases and a third fewer foster care placements and hospital visits for abuse.⁷

Early Childhood Benefits Start Now

■ AGES 0-2

Healthier pregnancies, delayed second births, reduced child abuse and neglect, fewer emergency room visits, improved factors associated with obesity and increased earnings and less welfare for parents.



■ AGES 3-4

Increased kindergarten readiness, fewer developmental delays and reduced school and parental work absenteeism.



■ AGES 5-8

Reduced grade retention, special education placement and absenteeism; increased reading and math proficiency, better health outcomes and lower costs.



WHO WE ARE

ReadyNation is the nation's preeminent business organization working to strengthen business and the economy through effective investments in children and youth.

Effective pre-kindergarten programs reduce costly grade retention, special education and other services right away

- In a Pennsylvania program, the percentage of children with developmental delays (a predictor of special education needs) fell from 21% at entry to 8% at program graduation.⁸
- Tennessee's preschool program reduced by half the number of children who had to repeat kindergarten.⁹
- In New Jersey, children who attended the Abbott Preschool Program at ages three and four were half as likely to be held back by second grade.¹⁰
- Children who attended the Chicago Child-Parent Centers were half as likely to experience child abuse and neglect, compared to nonparticipants.¹¹
- Quality early learning programs have been shown to immediately generate about \$2 for every dollar invested through the sale of local goods and services.¹²

The benefits continue into early elementary school, including the critical third-grade benchmark year. Third-grade scores correlate strongly with high school graduation

- Through grade three, participants in Michigan's Great Start Readiness Program were 35% less likely to have been held back, 16% more likely to pass the math portion of state exams and 24% more likely to pass the reading portion.¹³

- Graduates of the Chicago Child-Parent Centers had 35% less grade retention and 26% less special education placement than their third-grade peers.¹⁴
- Children who benefited as infants from a quality nurse-home visiting program show increased math and vocabulary scores through the third grade.¹⁵
- By third grade, participants in Utah's Granite School District Preschool program enjoyed a 51% increase in math proficiency and a 27% increase in language arts proficiency over peers who had not attended preschool.¹⁶

The impacts of early childhood education programs last a lifetime

- At-risk children randomly assigned to the Abecedarian early learning program in North Carolina were four times more likely to graduate from a four-year college and 42% more likely to be consistently employed as adults. In addition, the boys in the program were nearly four times more likely to report exercising regularly as young adults, and had significantly lower risk factors for heart disease, stroke and diabetes by their mid-30's.¹⁷

Take Action

- ▶ **Join ReadyNation!** There are no costs or meetings, only a willingness to consider invitations to speak out, with our support.
- ▶ **Speak to policymakers and/or the media.** We prepare remarks.
- ▶ **Support local early education programs in your community.** Visit www.ReadyNation.org/Ready2Go for ideas.

WHO WE ARE

ReadyNation is the nation's preeminent business leader organization working to strengthen business through better policies for children and youth. It operates under the umbrella of the non-profit Council for A Strong America. Our more than 1,100 members educate policymakers and the public about effective investments that will help business compete in today's global marketplace by helping children get on the right track to succeed in school and in life. Our members have contributed to victories for children at the federal level and in dozens of states. We invite anyone from a business or business organization to join. There are no membership fees, financial obligations, or formal meetings. Our staff support our members to take action, making the best use of their time. **Go to [ww.ReadyNation.org/join-us](http://www.ReadyNation.org/join-us).**

Add your voice.

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ENDNOTES

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