MISSION: READINESS
COUNCIL FOR A STRONG AMERICA
OHIO

FACTSHEET

Early Learning: A National Security Imperative

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

71 percent of today's young adults in Ohio 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.

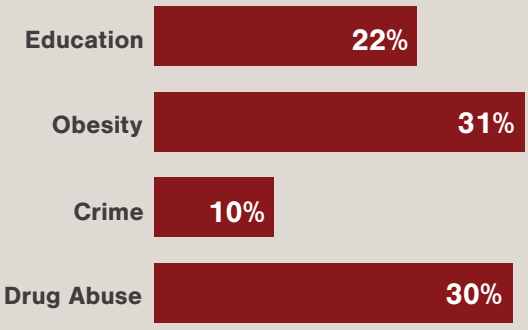
High-quality pre-K can help children succeed

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:

- Be better prepared for 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: For example, a randomized study of Chicago Head Start programs that emphasized healthy habits found that children who were not in the programs gained 16 percent more weight over the following two years than participating children.[5]
- Stay on the right side of the law: Studies of three 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 2016-17 state budget year, 30 states—17 with Republican governors and 13 with Democratic governors—increased funding for pre-K.[7]

However, 52 percent of the nation's 3- and 4-year-olds still do not attend pre-K, let alone a high-quality program.[8] In Ohio, the situation is worse, with 56 percent of young children not enrolled in pre-K.[9] 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.

1 Department of Defense. (2017, November). Qualified Military Available (QMA). Personal communication with Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. Jordan, M. (2014, June). Recruits' ineligibility tests the military. Wall Street Journal. https://www.wsj.com/articles/recruits-ineligibility-tests-the-military-1403909945

2 Harvard University Center on the Developing Child (n.d.) Key concepts: Brain architecture. http://developingchild.harvard.edu/key_concepts/brain_architecture/

3 Ladd, H. F., et al. (2012). Early childhood initiatives and third grade outcomes in North Carolina. http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.3102/0162373714559096; Barnett, W. S., et al (2013). Abbott Preschool Program longitudinal effects study: Fifth grade follow-up. http://nieer.org/research-report/201311apples205th20grade-pdf

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: http://bridgemi.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/GSRP-evaluation-may-21-12.pdf; Schweinhart, L.J., et al. (2005). Lifetime effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool study through age 40.

5 Fitzgibbon, M. L., et al (2005). Two-year follow-up results for Hip-Hop to Health Jr.: A randomized controlled trial for overweight prevention in preschool minority children. Journal of Pediatrics, 146 (5), 618-625.

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. Smith, A. (2015). The long-run effects of universal pre-K on criminal activity. http://www.sole-jole.org/16422.pdf

7 Education Commission of the States (2017). State pre-K funding 2016-17 Fiscal Year: Trends and opportunities https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/State-Pre-K-Funding-2016-17-Fiscal-Year-Trends-and-opportunities-1.pdf

8 KIDS COUNT Data Center http://datacenter.kidscount.org

9 KIDS COUNT Data Center (2018). Ohio young children not in school. https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/9010-young-children-not-in-school?loc=1&loct=2#detailed/2/37/false/1564/any/17975,17976

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.

5494 Deerlake Court / Cincinnati OH 45247 / 513.543.4981

COUNCIL FOR A
STRONG AMERICA

StrongNation.org