

HB

306

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA

MEMORANDUM

DATE: 3/27/08
TO: House HESS Committee
FROM: Rep. Les Gara
RE: Summary of Changes in CS for HB 306

Below is a summary of changes to the Committee Substitute for HB 306 (25-LS1228\W)


- Title Change
 - Page 1, Lines 1-2
 - "An Act providing for the establishment and implementation of a statewide early childhood education plan and guidelines."
- Sections 1, 2, and 4 were deleted from the previous version of the bill
- Section 1 (formerly Sec. 3)
 - Page 3, Lines 11-12
 - (16) Language "and implement" deleted.
 - Language now reads "devise [and implement] a statewide early childhood education plan for students three and four years of age"
 - Page 3, Line 17
 - (16) (B) after "Head Start," language inserted "to the extent permitted by law"
- Section 3
 - Page 4, Lines 5-10
 - New language added directing the Department of Education and Early Development to prepare and submit a report to the legislature on an early childhood education plan by January 15, 2009.

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 17, 2008
TO: Rep. Peggy Wilson, Chair of House HESS Committee
FROM: Rep. Les Gara 
RE: Testimony for HB 306

Representative Wilson,

I anticipate the following people will be testifying in support of HB306 tomorrow.

- Debi Baldwin, Rural CAP (off-net teleconference)
- Candace Winkler, Child Care Connection (off-net teleconference)
- Albert Rinchart, Tlingit and Haida Head Start Program (in person)
- Abbe Hensley, Executive Director of Best Beginnings (teleconference)

Please let me know if you have any questions. Thanks.



Alaska State Legislature

Representative Les Gara

Representative Mary Nelson

Representative Scott Kawasaki

Representative Beth Kerttula

Representative Max Gruenberg

State Capitol, Juneau, Alaska 99801

HB 306: Alaska Voluntary Pre-Elementary Early Education Act

Sponsor Statement

Alaska remains one of only 10 states that does not provide pre-Kindergarten education to its children on a statewide basis. HB 306 seeks to add Alaska to the ranks of the vast majority of states that have recognized the validity of studies showing that children who benefit from early education earn more money as adults, enter the job market in much larger numbers, obtain college education in higher numbers, remain off public assistance in greater numbers, and remain out of jail in much greater numbers. A government report published by the National Center for Education Statistics found that 53 percent of inmates are either illiterate or possess a very low literacy level.

Alaska has a responsibility to provide the best education possible for its children. Currently, outside of a few school district classrooms, the state only provides pre-K education through the Head Start program, which is only available to the poorest students, and which is underfunded (state funding has not risen since 2002). Due to underfunding, the Alaska Head Start Association estimates that more than 50% of the children who qualify cannot receive Head Start education. Our Head Start program has consistently lagged far behind its need. Providing early public education opportunities is a crucial stepping stone to brightening the future of young Alaskans.

Extensive research shows that a child's intellectual development is especially important before age six. A study by the National Institute for Early Education Research in 2004 found that children who attended state-funded pre-Kindergarten programs demonstrated improvements in vocabulary 31% greater than those who did not participate, and 44% greater in math. Young children who receive high quality early education do better in school academically, are better behaved in classes, and are more likely to stay in school, graduate, and go on to attend college.

The beneficial impact of early education also extends to the economy with multiple studies showing that funds invested in early education pay dividends in the long run. Every dollar invested in high-quality pre-kindergarten programs save taxpayers up to \$7. Pre-K results in savings by reducing the need for remedial and special education, welfare, and criminal justice services. An ongoing study of 40-year-old adults in Michigan who participated in the 1962 Perry Preschool Project found that adults with pre-K were more likely to be employed and earned 33 percent higher average income than their peers who did not have state-funded early education.

Additionally, a study prepared for the SEED program at the University of Alaska Southeast states that 87 percent of Alaska residents think it is important for state government to provide financial support for early education and child care.

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA
REPRESENTATIVE MARY NELSON
REPRESENTATIVE SCOTT KAWASAKI
REPRESENTATIVE BETH KERTTULA
REPRESENTATIVE MAX GRUENBERG

HB 306: Alaska Voluntary Pre-Elementary Program

Sectional Analysis

Section 1.

Defines pre-elementary program as one provided by a school district for students 3 through 4 years of age. Priority is given to low-income families to the extent that appropriations are insufficient to fund all programs.

Section 2.

Establishes age of eligibility (3-4 year olds).

Section 3.

Department of Education shall devise and implement a statewide early education plan that incorporates early learning guidelines adopted by the education board and coordinates with Head Start.

Section 4.

Defines pre-elementary program.

Section 5.

Board of education shall adopt early learning guidelines that support an effective and cost-efficient optional pre-elementary program provided under a statewide early childhood education plan approved by the department.

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA
REPRESENTATIVE MARY NELSON
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HB 306: Alaska Voluntary Pre-Elementary Program

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LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH REPORT

JANUARY 4, 2006



REPORT NUMBER 06.026

THE VALUE OF PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

PREPARED FOR REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA

BY ROGER WITHINGTON, LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

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You asked for information on the value of prekindergarten programs. Specifically, you asked for a brief summary of current reports or studies that analyze the value of prekindergarten programs. In addition, you asked for a summary of Alaska's prekindergarten program that was discontinued in fiscal year 2003.

As you may know, prekindergarten programs (Pre-K) are generally defined as direct educational services to children who are not yet eligible for kindergarten. Usually, this refers to children ages 3 and 4, but occasionally may apply to younger children. Please keep in mind that there are a number of terms that are used interchangeably with prekindergarten including early education, preschool, early learning, school readiness, and child development. Although more than one-third of states provide state funding supplements to Head Start programs, these generally are not considered state-funded prekindergarten programs.

SUMMARY

According to the National Education Association (NEA), children who attend high quality prekindergarten programs are better prepared for kindergarten, have better language and math skills, better cognitive and social skills, and better relationships with classmates.¹ In addition, they note that children who attend prekindergarten are less likely to drop out of school, repeat grades, need special education, or get in trouble with the law when they are older. They also note that children with disadvantaged backgrounds, such as low-income or a single parent household, generally benefit more from quality prekindergarten programs than do children who are not disadvantaged. The NEA advocates for universal high quality prekindergarten programs because it "represents one of the best investments our country can make."

According to the Education Commission of the States (ECS), forty-three states currently fund early learning programs for young children, up from about ten states in 1980.² Generally, the goal of these programs is to promote school readiness so children have a better chance of future success, both in school and in life. The ECS notes that implementation of state-funded prekindergarten programs varies widely. As examples, some programs are half day, others full day; some programs are for only four-year-olds, others include three-year-olds, while others offer services to infants and toddlers; some prekindergarten programs are operated through local school districts, while others offer services through public and private centers. The ECS also notes that most states target programs for children with an identified risk factor such as poverty, low parental education, teen parents, and English as a second language. Some states and cities, however, are working towards making quality prekindergarten programs universally available.

¹ The National Education Association (NEA) works to advance the cause of public education in the United States. The NEA is the nation's largest professional employee organization, with 2.7 million members who work at every level of education, from pre-school to university graduate programs. The NEA has affiliate organizations in every state, as well as in more than 14,000 local communities across the United States. The NEA's URL is <http://www.nea.org/index.html>

² The Education Commission of the States (ECS) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan interstate compact created in 1965 to improve public education by facilitating the exchange of information, ideas, and experiences among state policymakers and education leaders. The URL for the ECS is <http://www.ecs.org/>

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), Georgia and Oklahoma were the first states to expand preschool to all four-year-olds.³ Florida, Maryland, New York and West Virginia are in the process of phasing in their universal programs. The NCSL also notes that 36 states considered early education bills in 2005, and at least 28 states considered expanding preschool programs. According to the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), approximately 738,000 children, or about 10 percent of all three- and four-year-olds in the nation, participate in state-funded prekindergarten programs.⁴ The NIEER estimates that state spending on prekindergarten programs totals \$2.54 billion.

We identified numerous reports or studies that articulate the benefits of high quality prekindergarten programs. We chose to summarize the following reports because they are generally more recent than others, often cited as a bellwether study or report, discuss a program that has been evaluated with some scientific rigor, or offer a thorough summary of the status of prekindergarten activities in the United States.

THE EFFECTS OF UNIVERSAL PRE-K ON COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

In 2005, the journal *Developmental Psychology* published the results of new research that confirms that Oklahoma's universal prekindergarten program helps four-year-olds prepare for school by improving their cognitive and language functioning. The children who participated in the state-funded universal prekindergarten program performed better on cognitive tests that measured pre-reading and reading skills, prewriting and spelling skills, and math reasoning and problem-solving skills, than those children who did not participate in the program. The research results also showed that the prekindergarten program improved performances for children from all races and income brackets (as measured by eligibility for a reduced-price lunch). According to the study, low-income children and Hispanic children benefited the most from the program.

Although the report provided very little information about the program, the researchers noted that Oklahoma's high prekindergarten teacher education requirements, and the state's willingness to compensate prekindergarten teachers at the same level as elementary and secondary school teachers in the public schools, distinguishes this program from others.

We include the report, entitled "The Effects of Universal Pre-K on Cognitive Development," as Attachment A.

³ The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), founded in 1975, is a bipartisan organization that serves the legislators and staffs of the nation's 50 states, commonwealths, and territories. The NCSL provides research, technical assistance and opportunities for policymakers to exchange ideas on most state issues. The URL for the NCSL is <http://www.ncsl.org/index.htm#>

⁴ The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) supports early childhood education initiatives by providing objective, nonpartisan information based on research. The NIEER was established at Rutgers University's Graduate School of Education with a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts. The URL for the NIEER is <http://nieer.org/>

*THE EFFECTS OF STATE PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS ON YOUNG CHILDREN'S SCHOOL
READINESS IN FIVE STATES*

In 2004, the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), examined a sample of more than 5,000 four-year-olds enrolled in high-quality, state-funded prekindergarten programs in the states of Michigan, New Jersey, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and West Virginia. The Institute compared achievement scores of children who just completed the preschool program with the scores of a sample of children who did not participate in a program. The results of the examination found significant improvement in children's early language, literacy, and mathematical development, regardless of the child's racial or economic background.

Among other things, the study found that the children who attended state-funded prekindergarten programs showed gains in vocabulary scores about 31 percent greater than the gains of those children who did not participate in a program. The researchers note that these higher scores translate into an additional four months of progress in vocabulary growth. In mathematics, including basic number concepts and such tasks as simple addition and subtraction, telling time, and counting money, the children who participated in the state-funded preschool improved their math skills by 44 percent compared to children who did not participate in a program.

As we noted above, this study examined programs in five states—Michigan, New Jersey, Oklahoma, South Carolina and West Virginia. The programs in Michigan, New Jersey and South Carolina target at-risk children (usually low-income children), while the programs in Oklahoma and West Virginia are universal. Although each state program is unique, all required licensed teachers with four-year college degrees and certification in early childhood. These programs also maintain low teacher to child ratios (the highest ratio being one teacher to ten children), and low maximum class sizes (the highest being 20 students). Unfortunately the report did not provide any additional information regarding the studied programs.

We include "The Effects of State Prekindergarten Programs on Young Children's School Readiness in Five States" as Attachment B.

THE 2004 STATE PRESCHOOL YEARBOOK

In 2004, the National Institute for Early Education Research produced the *2004 State Preschool Yearbook* that summarizes state-funded prekindergarten programs in the United States during the 2002-2003 school year. This document is parsed into three sections, the first of which provides background information on preschool education in the United States, a description of the methods used by the NIERR to collect and analyze the data, a national summary of NIEER's findings, and NIEER's national policy recommendations. The second section provides detailed profiles of each state's policies regarding preschool access, quality standards, and resources. The last section of the report includes tables that provide the complete survey data obtained from every state, Head Start and child care data. A few of the findings from the NIEER's study are as follows.

- ◆ In 2002-2003, 38 states funded one or more prekindergarten initiatives serving a total of nearly 740,000 children (this represents an increase of 45,000 students from the previous school year). Access was uneven across states, however, with 10 states accounting for over three-quarters of enrollment.

- ◆ State prekindergarten initiatives served more than six times as many four-year-olds as three-year-olds in 2002-2003. Twenty states enrolled at least 10 percent of their four-year-olds in state preschool programs, but only three states served at least 10 percent of their three-year-olds.
- ◆ Georgia and Oklahoma continued to be the only states that made prekindergarten universally available to children. Across the United States, only one out of ten children ages three and four were participating in state preschool programs, as most states targeted programs that only serve economically or otherwise disadvantaged children.
- ◆ In 2002-2003, twelve states did not have a state-funded prekindergarten program.
- ◆ States need to initiate or improve policies that establish stronger quality standards. Only one state, Arkansas, met all ten of NIEER's quality benchmarks, whereas 20 state initiatives met five or fewer benchmarks.⁵
- ◆ State policies regarding quality standards were inconsistent. For example, one state may emphasize comprehensive services while another stresses teacher qualifications.
- ◆ Only 13 state prekindergarten initiatives required teachers to have both a bachelor's degree and specialized training in early childhood education. In addition, only 13 programs required teachers to be paid on a public school salary scale.
- ◆ State funding for prekindergarten initiatives totaled \$2.54 billion in 2002-2003. Over three-fifths of this funding was from five states—California, Georgia, New Jersey, New York, and Texas. Inadequate funding severely limited access and quality in most states.
- ◆ State spending per child enrolled in state-funded preschool ranged from less than \$1,000 in Maryland to more than \$8,700 in New Jersey. State spending per child averaged about \$3,500, less than half of the total funding provided per child in federal Head Start or public K-12 education.
- ◆ Between the 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 school years, total state spending (adjusted for inflation) rose by \$90 million, or four percent. However, state funding per child enrolled decreased by \$90, and 21 states decreased total spending.

We include *The State of Preschool: 2004 State Preschool Yearbook* as Attachment C.

⁵ The NIEER uses a quality standards checklist of ten items to compare standards of quality across different state prekindergarten programs

THE HIGH/SCOPE PERRY PRESCHOOL PROJECT

According to *Education Week*, "The High/Scope Perry Preschool Project is perhaps the best-known study of the long-term effects of a high-quality prekindergarten education." During the mid-1960s, the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation selected and tracked a group of 123 African-Americans, age 3 or 4, who were born in poverty and at high risk of failing in school.⁶ The children were randomly divided into a program group who received a high-quality preschool program based on High/Scope's participatory learning approach, and a comparison group who received no preschool program. This study provides a comprehensive evaluation of the long-term effect of quality prekindergarten on the lives of the participating students.

In their most recent evaluation of this group of students, the age of which was about 40, the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation was able to interview 97 percent of the study participants still living. Some of this study's major findings are as follows.

- ◆ A greater percentage of the group who received high-quality early education graduated from high school than did the non-program group (65% vs. 45%). This proved to be particularly true for the female participants (84% vs. 32%).
- ◆ A smaller percentage of females who received high-quality early education required treatment for mental impairment than did the non-program females (8% vs. 36%).
- ◆ A smaller percentage of females who received high-quality early education had to repeat a grade than did the non-program females (21% vs. 41%).
- ◆ The group who received high-quality early education on average outperformed the non-program group on various intellectual and language tests during their early childhood years, on school achievement tests between ages 9 and 14, and on literacy tests at ages 19 and 27.
- ◆ A greater percentage of the group who received high-quality early education was employed at age 40 than was the non-program group (76% vs. 62%).
- ◆ The group who received high-quality early education had median annual earnings more than \$5,000 higher than the non-program group (\$20,800 vs. \$15,300).
- ◆ A greater percentage of the group who received high-quality early education owned their own homes (37% vs. 28%).
- ◆ A greater percentage of the group who received high-quality early education had a savings account than did the non-program group (76% vs. 50%).

⁶ The High/Scope Educational Research Foundation is an independent nonprofit research, development, training and public advocacy organization. High/Scope's mission is "to lift lives through education." Among other things, the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation provides training to preschool and elementary teachers and administrators, conducts research on the effectiveness of educational programs, and develops curricula for infant, toddler, preschool, elementary, and adolescent programs. The URL for the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation is <http://www.highscope.org/index.asp>.

- The group who received high-quality early education had significantly fewer arrests than did the non-program group (36% vs. 55% arrested five times or more).
- Significantly fewer members of the group who received high-quality early care than the non-program group were ever arrested for violent crimes (32% vs. 48%), property crimes (36% vs. 58%), or drug crimes (14% vs. 34%).

According to the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, in constant dollars adjusted to 2000, the economic return to society of the Perry Preschool program was \$258,888 per participant, on an investment of \$15,166 per participant, or a \$17.07 return for every dollar invested.

Researchers with the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation identified the following attributes that contribute to the success of their prekindergarten program.

- The teachers in the Perry Preschool program had bachelor's degrees and were certified to teach in elementary, early childhood, and special education. Teachers also received training, supervision, and assessments that support the Perry Preschool program educational model, and were paid 10 percent above the local public school district's standard pay scale.
- The Perry Preschool program had four teachers for 20 to 25 children.
- The Perry Preschool program was a two school year program, starting at age three.
- The Perry Preschool program consisted of daily classes (five days a week) of two-and-a-half hours or more.
- The teachers in the Perry Preschool program helped children plan, perform, and review their own work. The classroom was arranged and the day was scheduled to support children's self-initiated learning activities.
- Perry Preschool program teachers visited with families at home, at least once every two weeks.

We include *The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40. Summary, Conclusions, and Frequently Asked Questions* as Attachment D.⁷

Additional information on the High Scope Perry Preschool Project can be found at <http://www.highscope.org/Research/PerryProject/perrymain.htm>

ABECEDARIAN EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION PROJECT

The Abecedarian Early Childhood Intervention Project began in the 1970s by the FPG Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.⁸ The Abecedarian Project scientifically studied the potential benefits of early childhood education for children from low-income families. Children who were selected to participate in the program received full-time, high-quality instruction in a childcare setting from infancy through age five. Each child had an individualized plan of educational activities. These activities focused on social, emotional, and cognitive areas of development, and gave particular emphasis to language development. The children's progress was monitored over time with follow-up studies conducted at ages 12, 15, and 21.

So far, the findings demonstrate that important, long-lasting benefits are associated with the high-quality early childhood program. A sample of the benefits experienced by the program participants gleaned from the young-adult assessment (age 21) are as follows.

- ◆ The children who received early childhood education in the Abecedarian program are projected to make roughly \$143,000 more over their lifetimes than those who did not take part in the program.
- ◆ The mothers of children who were enrolled in the program also expect earnings of about \$133,000 more over their lifetimes than the mothers of the children who did not take part in the program.
- ◆ School districts saved more than \$11,000 per child because participants are less likely to require special or remedial education.
- ◆ The children who received early childhood education in the Abecedarian project had higher cognitive test scores from the toddler years to age 21.
- ◆ Academic achievement in both reading and math was higher from the primary grades through young adulthood for the children who received early childhood education in the Abecedarian project.
- ◆ The children who participated in the program completed more years of education and were more likely to attend a four-year college.
- ◆ The mothers of the children who participated in the program achieved higher educational and employment status than did the mothers of the children who were not in the program. These results were especially pronounced for teen mothers.
- ◆ Taxpayers received four dollars in benefits for every dollar spent on high-quality early education programs.

⁸ FPG Child Development Institute is a multidisciplinary institute at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The institute's mission is to cultivate and share the knowledge necessary to enhance child development and family wellbeing. The institute, through grants and contracts, conducts research and provides outreach services. The URL for the FPG Child Development Institute is <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/index.cfm>

We include the FPG Child Development Institute's summary of the Abecedarian Project as Attachment E.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WITH A HIGH PUBLIC RETURN

In 2003, economists with the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis calculated that the potential annual return from a focused, high-quality early childhood education program is as high as 16 percent.⁹ Most of the return benefits the economy as a whole because individuals who participate in high-quality early childhood education programs developed greater skills than they otherwise would have, which in turn contributes to the local economies (approximately 12% return). A smaller portion (approximately 4%) of the return benefits the children who received early childhood education in the form of higher wages later in life. The researchers used data from the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project to conduct their analysis.

In June 2005, as an expansion to their 2003 research, the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis researchers proposed expanding the scope of early childhood education programming to meet the needs of all impoverished children ages five and younger, including newborns. In making this proposal, the researchers cited advances in brain research that indicate the most critical neurological development occurs between birth and age three.

In summary, the authors maintain that economic development schemes based on attracting specific companies or industries often waste taxpayer dollars, whereas investment in early childhood development yields high and dependable returns, in turn aiding long-term economic growth.

We include *Early Childhood Development: Economic Development with a High Public Return* as Attachment F.

EARLY EDUCATION IN THE STATES: A YEAR IN REVIEW—2004

In March 2005, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) produced, *Early Education in the States: A Year in Review—2004*, to provide detailed information about actions of state legislatures on early education issues. Among other things, this report contains a brief review of the research on early education, NCSL's comments on the role of state legislatures in early education, and a state-by-state summary of state bills, acts, executive orders, and proposals made in 2004 that pertain to early education.

In addition to summarizing many of the reports or studies we discussed above, the NCSL notes that incorporated into recent child development initiatives are three new components: enhancing

The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis is one of 12 regional Reserve Banks that, together with the Board of Governors in Washington, D.C., make up the Federal Reserve System—the United States' central bank. The URL for the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis' early childhood education website is <http://minneapolisfed.org/research/studies/earlychild/>

the role of parents; promoting innovation at the local level; and establishing state-level planning councils.

The NCSL notes that generally, state legislators should approach early education from a number of different perspectives. In some cases, early education has been one part of a larger education reform effort. Lately, legislators have made connections between early education and a state's ability to meet requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act. State legislators also view early education as part of the solution to reducing the achievement gap for children before they enter the early elementary grades. In addition, the positive results demonstrated in long-term economic research have prompted policymakers to consider early education as a long-term investment.

We include *Early Education in the States: A Year in Review—2004* as Attachment G.

OTHER INFORMATIVE SOURCES

During the course of our research, we identified additional sources of early childhood education information that you may find useful. We identify these sources and their website address in Table 1.

Table 1: Sources of Early Childhood Education information	
Organization	URL
Child Development Center, Wilder Foundation	www.wilder.org/programs.0.html
Education and Early Learning, Committee for Economic Development	www.ced.org/projects/educ.shtml
Education Commission of the States	www.ecs.org/ecsmain.asp?page=/html/issue.asp?issueID=184
Foundation for Child Development	www.ffcd.org/
National Child Care Information Center Online Library	nccic.org/
National Education Association	www.nea.org/index.html
National Scientific Council on the Developing Child	www.developingchild.net/
The RAND Corporation	www.rand.org/pubs/online/education/index.html
Ready4K, Minnesota's School Readiness Program	www.ready4k.org/
Strategies for Children: Early Education for All Campaign	www.strategiesforchildren.org/eea/eea_horne.htm
The Trust for Early Education	www.trustforearlyed.org/
U.S. Department of Education	www.ed.gov/teachers/how/early/edpicks.jhtml?src=qc

ALASKA'S TWO-YEAR KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

As you know, Chapter 50, SLA 2003 (House Bill 154) amended Alaska Statute 14.03.080(c) to restrict education foundation formula funding of four-year olds attending kindergarten. At the time, approximately 30 of the 53 school districts in Alaska offered some form of a two-year kindergarten program, allowing both four- and five-year olds to attend (some school districts allowed all four-year olds to attend while others did not). Chapter 50, SLA 2003 restricts foundation formula funding to four-year olds for whom there is a realistic expectation that the child will successfully progress through the kindergarten curriculum and advance to the first grade the following school year. According to the Department of Education and Early Development's (DEED) fiscal note attached to HB 154, this amendment resulted in a savings of approximately \$3.9 million.

Although the letter of intent Governor Murkowski included with HB 154 noted the \$3.9 million saving that would result from the enactment of HB 154, the saving does not appear to be the primary motivation for the bill. Eddy Jeans, Manager of the School Finance and Facilities Section of the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, testified during a House Education committee meeting, as well as numerous other committee meetings that discussed HB 154, that the intent of this bill was to address the policy question of whether the legislature wanted to fund four-year-olds in the kindergarten-through-12th-grade program.¹⁰ He also pointed to an equity issue as not every school district in Alaska took advantage of the "loop-hole" in the law. According to Mr. Jeans, it would cost the state approximately \$60 to \$62 million annually to provide kindergarten for all four-year olds. Mr. Jeans noted that this estimate does not include any improvements to the capacity of districts' facilities, such as providing adequate classroom space.

Also during a House Education committee meeting, Kevin Sweeny, then Special Assistant to the Office of the Commissioner of the Department of Education and Early Development, testified, "the commissioner [of DEED] would agree that education would be better if the legislature funded all four-year-olds. In some districts it has shown that bringing kids in at four years old has helped them progress."¹¹ He also noted that the fundamental issue represented by HB 154 is whether the policy makers want to fund a statewide two-year kindergarten program through the foundation formula.

¹⁰ Eddy Jeans, now the Director of School Finance with the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, can be contacted at 907-465-2891

¹¹ In addition, in November 2001, the Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development adopted a resolution calling for voluntary preschool for all three- and four-year-old children. The resolution also expresses support for the development of pilot preschool programs in communities with low achievement scores on state exams, high poverty, and lack of Head Start or other early development programs

ALASKA COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL PROJECT - ALASKA'S PRESCHOOL PILOT PROGRAM

During each of the last two state fiscal years, the DEED received federally earmarked money to help fund the Alaska Community Preschool Project. During FY2005, the DEED distributed \$800,000, through a competitive process, to seven school districts (serving eight communities), to offer high-quality preschool.¹² During FY2006, the program received \$496,000 and funded services in seven communities in six districts (Juneau, Hoonah, King Cove, Sand Point, Bethel, Unalakleet and Minto). Federal funding for FY2007 has not been determined.

The purpose of this project is to augment existing preschool programs, that often operate in partnership with other entities such as Head Start, to bring them up to the teaching standards prescribed by the Feuerstein Instrumental Enrichment—Basic education model. So far the project has served roughly 200 children.¹³

READY TO READ, READY TO LEARN TASK FORCE

In May 2005, Governor Murkowski called for the establishment of the Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task Force. The governor charged this task force with identifying the following:

- ◆ Ways Alaskans can improve the readiness of preschoolers to read and learn,
- ◆ Ways families can become better at teaching children to listen, speak, read and write,
- ◆ Ways preschools and childcare centers can provide the best possible start for children,
- ◆ Ways the business community can participate in this effort, and
- ◆ Ways state and local governments can support the effort.

¹² In FY2005, the DEED received a total \$1.2 million, and spent the money not directed to district programs on training and materials. Paul S. Sugar, Education Specialist II with the Department of Education and Early Development, can be reached at 907-465-4862.

¹³ The International Center for the Enhancement of Learning Potential (ICELP), the Feuerstein Instrumental Enrichment—Basic program is directed toward the younger child, from approximately three to seven years of age, and the very low functioning older individual. The program is designed for use in a classroom group setting, for smaller groups of targeted learners, and as a one-to-one therapeutic intervention. The program also provides an "early intervention" to enable students who are developmentally at risk, or those individuals who have not acquired basic foundational knowledge and skills, to respond to direct stimuli and develop cognitive functions.

First Lady Nancy Murkowski is the Chair of Task Force while the Alaska Humanities Forum has the lead in establishing and administering the task force.¹⁴

According to the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Governor Murkowski will ask the Alaska Legislature to provide \$750,000 in fiscal year 2007 to improve childhood literacy and learning. This was announced by Nancy Murkowski at the Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task Force held in Anchorage on November 10, 2005. The Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Education and Early Development will use the funds to carry out recommendations currently being developed by the task force.

We include the Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task Force's most recent newsletter "Task Force News" as Attachment H.

I hope you find this information to be useful. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions or need additional information.

¹⁴ The Alaska Humanities Forum was founded in 1972 by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH); the Forum is one of 56 state and territorial groups also supported by the NEH. The Forum is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with a mission to "use the wisdom and methods of the humanities to enrich the civic, intellectual and cultural life of all Alaskans." The Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task Force URL is <http://www.akhf.org/ReadytoRead/ECL-Summit.html>

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A

William T. Gormley, Jr., Ph.D., Ted Gayer, Ph.D., Deborah Phillips, Ph.D., and Brittany Dawson, M.A., "The Effects of Universal Pre-K on Cognitive Development," *Developmental Psychology*, American Psychological Association, Volume 41, No. 6,
<http://www.apa.org/journals/releases/dev416872.pdf>

Attachment B

W. Steven Barnett, Ph.D., Cynthia Lamy, Ed.D., Kwanghee Jung, Ph.D., "The Effects of State Prekindergarten Programs on Young Children's School Readiness in Five States," The National Institute for Early Education Research, Rutgers University, December 2005

Attachment C

W. Steven Barnett, Ph.D., Jason T. Hustedt, Ph.D., Kenneth B. Robin, Psy.M., and Karen L. Schulman, M.P.P., *The State of Preschool: 2004 State Preschool Yearbook*, The National Institute for Early Education Research, 2004,
<http://nieer.org/yearbook/>

Attachment D

Lawrence J. Schweinhart, *The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study through Age 40, Summary, Conclusions, and Frequently Asked Questions*, High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, High/Scope Press, 2005,
<http://www.highscope.org/Research/PerryProject/perrymain.htm>

Attachment E

"Early Learning, Later Success: The Abecedarian Study, Early Childhood Educational Intervention for Poor Children, Executive Summary," The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, FPG Child Development Inst., Chapel Hill, NC,
<http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~abc/summary.cfm>

Attachment F

Art Rolnick, Rob Grunewald, *Early Childhood Development: Economic Development with a High Public Return*, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, December 2003,
<http://minneapolisfed.org/research/studies/earlychild/abc-part2.pdf>

Attachment G

Steffanie Clothier, *Early Education in the States A Year in Review—2004*, The National Conference of State Legislatures, March 2005,
<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/cyf//prekreport.htm>

Attachment H

"Task Force News," Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task Force, Vol. 1, No. 1, December 2005,
<http://www.akhf.org/ReadytoRead/R2Rnewsletter1.pdf>



everychild.one voice.

2007-2008 Legislative Platform

The Alaska PTA will support legislation and regulations, which promote the Purpose of the PTA cited as follows:

- a. To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, community and place of worship.
- b. To raise the standards of home life
- c. To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth
- d. To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth
- e. To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education.

This legislative platform is the authority for selecting those areas of legislation to be addressed by the Alaska PTA. Positions taken on state and federal legislation will conform to policies adopted in this basic platform, priorities approved at the Legislative Issues Conference, resolutions adopted at Convention and positions adopted by Alaska PTA Board.

A. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

The Alaska PTA supports legislation and regulations that will:

1. Maintain local school district self-governance; require financial accountability, timely and effective communications between all parties regarding school performance records and local control of all public schools.
2. Require bargaining unit within School Districts to give a three-day strike notice.

B. FUNDING FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

The Alaska PTA supports legislation and regulations for state and local funding for public education, that is adequate, equitable, stable and accountable. To achieve this, Alaska PTA supports the following concepts:

1. Public education is primarily a responsibility of both state and local governments and must be a top funding priority.
2. The Alaska Legislature must consider new, stable sources of revenue to fund education and initiate forward funding for education. This would enable school districts to initiate, improve upon and maintain educational programs that show results in achieving high academic and or life skills performance by students according to their abilities. These programs will allow students to pass all appropriate and required tests while maintaining a safe and sound environment that promotes and facilitates learning.
3. The Department of Education and Early Development should annually compile data on the finances of all School Districts and make this information readily available to the public in a comprehensible and relevant format. Uniform accounting procedures should be required by the State in order that district expenditures for programs and administrative costs can be computed equitably, while showing number of participants within the program for the fiscal period reported.

7. Ensure any environment, in which a child is placed, is safe and adequately staffed, and encourage efforts to remove children from adult jails and lockups, in order to place children in more appropriate facilities
8. Encourage cooperation at all levels of government with comprehensive emergency management services, and support sponsorship of emergency preparedness programs in cooperation with the appropriate local school governing bodies.
9. Require 60 minutes of daily physical education by accredited professional instructors for every primary and secondary school.
10. Support Denali kid care to ensure that children, teens (through age 18) and pregnant women of both working and non-working families who meet the current) income guidelines have access to affordable health insurance.
11. Require confidential reporting to the state where every child is receiving their 1-12th grade education be it public, private or home schooling.

E. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CHILD CARE

The Alaska PTA supports legislation and regulations, which will:

1. Support a comprehensive program to provide training for parents of all children from birth to age 5.
2. Provide high-quality, developmentally appropriate preschool programs, for all children age 3-5
3. Improve licensing for day care, preschool programs, and foster home parents to ensure high standards.
4. Provide day care assistance to families in need to allow them to pay for quality programs.
5. Support a statewide system of resource and referral centers to help parents find accessible, affordable, quality childcare.

F. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The Alaska PTA supports legislation and regulations, which will:

1. Provide opportunities for parent and community participation in all aspects of education, including input to the classified/certified employee's evaluation process.
2. Allow volunteers to deduct from their federal tax return volunteer miles driven at the same rate as business usage.
3. Include parents, community members, and educational professionals in all aspects of student performance standards.
4. Alaska PTA strongly supports and advocates for the development and implementation of the parental involvement policies of NCLB that will:
 - Train Teachers and staff to apply the six standards of parent involvement:
 1. Communicating
 2. Parenting
 3. Student Learning
 4. Volunteering
 5. School decision making and advocacy
 6. Collaborating with the community
 - Engage parents
 - Provide parents with clear and timely information about NCLB
 - Develop effective advocates

**THE FOLLOWING PAGES MAY
NOT FILM LEGIBLY BECAUSE OF
THE POOR QUALITY OF THE ORIGINAL**

Early Childhood Development: Economic Development with a High Public Return

Art Roinick

Senior Vice President and Director of Research

Rob Grunewald

Regional Economic Analyst

Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis

Note: The following paper was developed in March 2003 with Minnesota audiences in mind. However, the authors subsequently discovered a high degree of interest throughout the country in their research on the economics of early childhood development and the universality of the issues discussed. This paper also motivated the October conference at the Minneapolis Fed.

Early childhood development programs are rarely portrayed as economic development initiatives, and we think that is a mistake. Such programs, if they appear at all, are at the bottom of the economic development lists for state and local governments. They should be at the top. Most of the numerous projects and initiatives that state and local governments fund in the name of creating new private businesses and new jobs result in few public benefits. In contrast, studies find that well-focused investments in early childhood development yield high public as well as private returns.

Why the case for publicly subsidizing private businesses is flawed and misguided

Over the last few years, the future of Minnesota's economy has been called into question. The resulting debate illustrates how little is understood about the fundamentals that underlie economic development. While many recognize the success of the Minnesota economy in the past, they see a weakening in the foundations of that success. Some point to the decline in corporate headquarters located in Minnesota. Some point to the lack of funding for new startup companies, particularly in the areas of high-tech and biotech. Some point to the possible loss of professional sports teams. Some think the

University of Minnesota is not visible enough in the business community. And still others raise the broader concern that Minnesota's citizens and policymakers have become too complacent and unwilling to make the public commitment to be competitive in a global economy.

Those who raise these concerns conclude that Minnesota and local governments need to take a more active role in promoting our economy. Often that implies that the state or local governments subsidize private activities that the market is not funding. Proponents of this view argue that without such subsidies, either well-deserving businesses will not get funded or other states will lure our businesses to greener pastures.

State and local subsidies to private businesses are not new. In the name of economic development and creating new jobs, Minnesota, and virtually every other state in the union, has a long history of subsidizing private businesses. We have argued in previous studies that the case for these subsidies is short-sighted and fundamentally flawed.¹ From a national perspective, jobs are not created—they are only relocated. From a state and local perspective, the economic gains are suspect because many would have been realized without the subsidies. In summary, what often passes for economic development and sound public investment is neither.

If subsidizing private businesses is the wrong way to promote Minnesota's economy, then what is the right way?

To answer this question, we need to understand that unfettered markets generally allocate scarce resources to their most productive use. Consequently, governments should only intervene in markets when they fail.

Market failures can occur for a variety of reasons; two well-documented failures are goods that have external effects and those with public attributes. Unfettered markets will generally produce the wrong amount of such goods. Education has long

been recognized as a good that has external effects and public attributes. Without public support, the market will yield too few educated workers and too little basic research. This problem has long been understood in the United States and it is why our government, at all levels, has supported public funding for education. (According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, for example, the United States in 1999 ranked high on public funding of higher education.) Nevertheless, recent studies suggest that one critical form of education, early childhood development, or ECD, is grossly underfunded. However, if properly funded and managed, investment in ECD yields an extraordinary return, far exceeding the return on most investments, private or public.

A convincing economic case for publicly subsidizing education has been around for years and is well supported. The economic case for investing in ECD is more recent and deserves more attention.

Public funding of education has deep roots in U.S. history. John Adams, the author of the oldest functioning written constitution in the world, the constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1779, declared in that document that a fundamental duty of government is to provide for education. Publicly funded schools have been educating children in the United States ever since. Today over 85 percent of U.S. children are educated in publicly funded schools. John Adams argued for public funding of education because he realized the importance of educated voters to the well-being of a democracy. We suspect that he also understood the economic benefits that flow to the general public.

Investment in human capital breeds economic success not only for those being educated, but also for the overall economy. Clearly today, the market return to education is sending a strong signal. Prior to 1983, the wages of a worker with an undergraduate degree exceeded a worker with a high school degree by roughly 40 percent. Currently, that difference is close to 60 percent. The wage premium for an advanced degree has grown even more. Prior to 1983, the wages of a worker with a graduate degree exceeded those of a worker with a high school degree by roughly 60 percent. Today, that difference is over 100 percent.

Minnesota represents a good example of the economic benefits that flow from education. Evidence is clear that our state has one of the most successful economies in the country because it has one of the most educated workforces. In 2000, almost a third of persons 25 and older in Minnesota held at least a bachelor's degree, the sixth highest state in the nation. To ensure the future success of Minnesota's economy, we must continue to provide a highly educated workforce.

The economic case for public funding of early childhood development

Knowing that we need a highly educated workforce, however, does not tell us where to invest limited public resources. Policymakers must identify the educational investments that yield the highest public returns. Here the literature is clear: Dollars invested in ECD yield extraordinary public returns.

The quality of life for a child and the contributions the child makes to society as an adult can be traced back to the first few years of life. From birth until about 5 years old a child undergoes tremendous growth and change. If this period of life includes support for growth in cognition, language, motor skills, adaptive skills and social-emotional functioning, the child is more likely to succeed in school and later contribute to society. However, without support during these early years, a child is more likely to drop out of school, receive welfare benefits and commit crime.

A well-managed and well-funded early childhood development program, or ECDP, provides such support. Current ECDPs include home visits as well as center-based programs to supplement and enhance the ability of parents to provide a solid foundation for their children. Some have been initiated on a large scale, such as federally funded Head Start, while other small-scale model programs have been implemented locally, sometimes with relatively high levels of funding per participant.

The question we address is whether the current funding of ECDPs is high enough. We make the case that it is not, and that the benefits achieved from ECDPs far exceed their costs. Indeed, we find that the return to ECDPs far exceeds the return on most projects that are currently funded as economic development.

Many of the initial studies of ECDPs found little improvement; in particular, they found only short-term improvements in cognitive test scores. Often children in early childhood programs would post improvements in IQ relative to nonparticipants, only to see the IQs of nonparticipants catch up within a few years.

However, later studies found more long-term effects of ECDPs. One often-cited research project is the High/Scope study of the Perry Preschool in Ypsilanti, Mich., which demonstrates that the returns available to an investment in a high-quality ECDP are significant. During the 1960s the Perry School program provided a daily 2 1/2-hour classroom session for 3- to 4-year-old children on weekday mornings and a 1 1/2-hour home visit to each mother and child on weekday afternoons. Teachers were certified to teach in elementary, early childhood and special education, and were paid 10 percent above the local public school district's standard pay scale. During the annual 30-week program, about one teacher was on staff for every six children.¹

Beginning in 1962, researchers tracked the performance of children from low-income black families who completed the Perry School program and compared the results to a control group of children who did not participate. The research project provided reliable longitudinal data on participants and members of the control group. At age 27, 117 of the original 123 subjects were located and interviewed.

The results of the research were significant despite the fact that, as in several other studies, program participants lost their advantage in IQ scores over nonparticipants within a few years after completing the program. Therefore a significant contribution to the program's success likely derived from growth in noncognitive areas involving social-emotional functioning. During elementary and secondary school, Perry School participants were less likely to be placed in a special education program and had a significantly higher average achievement score at age 14 than nonparticipants. Over 65 percent of program participants graduated from regular high school compared with 45 percent of nonparticipants. At age 27, four times as many program participants as nonparticipants earned \$2,000 or more per month. And only one-fifth as many program participants as nonparticipants were arrested five or more times by age 27.

Perry School Preschool's Estimated Impact per Program Participant

TABLE 1A Benefit/Cost Analysis

Present Value in 1992 Dollars Discounted at 3%

Benefits*	For Participant	For Public	Total
Child care provided	736	0	736
More efficient K-12 education (such as less grade retention and higher achievement)	0	6,677	6,677
Decrease in public adult education costs	0	243	243
Increase in participants' earnings and employee benefits	21,485	2,646	24,131
Decrease in crime	0	70,647	70,647
Increase in publicly funded higher education costs	0	-686	-686
Decrease in welfare payments	2,609	934	3,543
Total Benefits	19,510	\$8,433	108,002
Cost of Program	0	12,356	12,356

Estimated return on \$1 invested in program

For Participant and Public: \$8.74 (\$108,002 in Benefits, \$12,356 for Cost of Program)

For Public: \$7.16 (\$8,433 in Benefits, \$1,236 for Cost of Program)

* Benefits and costs were discounted from age 4 through age 27. The total cost of the program is \$12,356. For more information, see the report by Heckman et al., "The High/Scope Perry Preschool Program," *Journal of Human Capital*, 2002, 2, 2, 285-312.

Other studies of ECDPs, while not solely focused on 3- to 4-year-old children, also show improvements in scholastic achievement and less crime. For example, the Syracuse Preschool Program provided support for disadvantaged children from prenatal care through age 5. Ten years later, problems with probation and criminal offenses were 70 percent less among participants compared with a control group.

As the result of the Abecedarian Project in North Carolina, which provided children from low-income families a full-time, high-quality educational experience from infancy through age 5, academic achievement in both reading and math was higher for program participants relative to nonpart-

Perry School Preschool's Estimated Impact per Program Participant



Real Internal Rate of Return*

Benefits**		Average Annual Effect in 1992 Dollars		
		For Participant	For Public	Total
Costs are avoided	(Ages 3-4)	\$45	0	385
More efficient K-12 education	(Ages 5-17)	0	747	747
Decrease in public adult education services	(Ages 20-25)	0	39	39
Increase in participants' earnings and employer benefits	(Ages 18-27) (Ages 28-65)	2,142 1,070	714 357	2,856 1,427
Decrease in crime	(Ages 18-27) (Ages 28-65)	0 0	8,923 1,565	8,923 1,565
Increase in publicly funded higher education costs	(Ages 20-25)	0	-225	225
Increase in welfare benefits	(Ages 18-27) (Ages 28-65)	392 31	431 31	39 3
Cost of program	(Ages 3-4)	0	6,444	6,444
Estimated Real Internal Rate of Return		4%	12%	16%

* The internal rate of return is the interest rate that equates the present value of payments and revenue streams to program costs. The above amounts were allocated annually across the life of the program.

** Benefits and costs were measured from ages 3 through 27 or 1 projected for ages 28 through 65 (see page 27 for details). Total program cost is \$6.5 billion for ages 3-4.

participants into young adulthood. Furthermore, participants had fewer incidences of grade retention and special education placements by age 15.

The High/Scope study conducted a benefit-cost analysis by converting the benefits and costs found in the study into monetary values in constant 1992 dollars discounted annually at 3 percent. The researchers found that for every dollar invested in the program during the early 1960s, over \$8 in benefits was returned to the program participants and society as a whole (see Table 1A).

While 8-to-1 is an impressive benefit-to-cost ratio, policymakers should place this result in context with returns from other economic develop-

ment projects. Perhaps another project can boast a higher benefit-to-cost ratio. Unfortunately, well-grounded benefit-to-cost ratios are seldom computed for public projects. However, an alternative measure—the internal rate of return—can be used to more easily compare the public, as well as private, return to investments. (The internal rate of return is the interest rate received for an investment consisting of payments and revenue that occur at regular periods.)

To calculate the internal rate of return for the Perry School program, we estimated the time periods in which costs and benefits in constant dollars were paid or received by program participants and society (see Table 1B). We estimate the real internal rate of return for the Perry School program at 16 percent. "Real" indicates that the rate of return is adjusted for inflation.

While program participants directly benefited from their increase in after-tax earnings and fringe benefits, these benefits were smaller than those gained by the general public. Based on present value estimates, about 80 percent of the benefits went to the general public (students were less disruptive in class and went on to commit fewer crimes), yielding over a 12 percent internal rate of return for society in general. Compared with other public investments, and even those in the private sector, an ECDP seems like a good buy. This analysis suggests that early childhood development is underfunded; otherwise, the internal rate of return on an ECDP would be comparable to other public investments.

As with virtually all studies, there are caveats to the High/Scope findings. On the one hand, the High/Scope study may overstate the results we could achieve today. Problems facing children 30 years ago were different from the problems facing children today. Single parenthood,² parental drug use, neighborhood crime are higher in many areas of the country than they were 30 years ago. Therefore, the rate of return of an ECDP today may be lower than the Perry School program.

Furthermore, in reviewing our method of calculating the internal rate of return, one could argue that some of the payments and revenue streams assigned should have started or ended in different years, or that assigning an even distribution distorts the actual payments and revenue made. Nevertheless, we find that the final result holds,

even when payments and revenue are adjusted to a more conservative distribution.

On the other hand, the High/Scope study may understate the results we could achieve today. First, the High/Scope study doesn't measure positive effects on children born to participant families after the study period. The knowledge gained by parents participating in the program likely transferred to their younger children. Second, the study may further understate the effects because it doesn't take into account effects on future generations. With increased education and earnings, participants' children would be less likely to commit crime and more likely to achieve higher levels of education and income than if their parents hadn't attended the Perry School program. A chain of poverty may have been broken.

The returns to ECDPs are especially high when placed next to other spending by governments made in the name of economic development. Yet ECD is rarely considered as an economic development measure.

For example, tax increment financing and other subsidies have recently been used to locate a discount retail store and an entertainment center in downtown Minneapolis, and to relocate a major corporate headquarters to suburban Richfield and a computer software firm to downtown St. Paul. Can any of these projects, which combined represent an estimated quarter of a billion dollars in public subsidies, stand up to a 12 percent public return on investment? From the state's point of view, if the subsidy is simply moving businesses within the state, the public return is zero. If the subsidy is required for the business to survive, the risk-adjusted public return is not merely small but could be negative.

As our lawmakers review proposals to build or improve the state's major professional sports stadiums, let's not make the same mistake. The various proposals to build new baseball and football stadiums and improve the current basketball stadium total over \$1 billion. Can new stadiums offer a comparable public return on investment as an ECDP? How does a new stadium reduce crime, increase earnings and potentially break a chain of poverty? We propose that this \$1 billion plus be invested in a project with a much higher public return.

Proposal: Minnesota Foundation for Early Childhood Development

Our proposal—to create a foundation for early childhood development in Minnesota—isn't born in a vacuum. For several years the state of Minnesota has sponsored initiatives to help prepare children for kindergarten, specifically, Early Childhood Family Education, or ECFE, School Readiness and state-funded Head Start programs. These programs often work together in supporting early childhood development.

ECFE provides support to parents and their children from birth until kindergarten enrollment to promote the healthy growth and development of children. The program offers classes for parents and

Table 2 Cost Estimate to Educate all 3- and 4-Year-Old Children from Low-Income Families in Minnesota at a Two-Year, High-Quality ECDP

Annual cost of program

Number of 3- and 4-year-old children living in poverty*	30,000
Cost per child**	\$ 9,500
Total	\$ 285,000,000

Current funds available

Federal and state annual funds for Head Start (Serves about 14,300 children at an annual cost of \$5,750 per child)	\$ 81,925,000
School Readiness (Estimate that 50 percent of middle-income parents will participate in the program for free)	\$ 12,000,000
Early Childhood Family Education (Estimate that 50 percent of middle-income parents will participate in the program for free)	\$ 12,000,000
Other	\$ 10,000,000
Total available	\$ 115,925,000
Additional funds needed	\$ 170,075,000

* U.S. Census Bureau, *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 1997*, Table A-12.

children, and provides optional home visits. About \$20 million in state aid was allocated to ECFE in 2001, which supported programs for more than 300,000 parents and children.

Between the ages of 3 1/2 to 5 years, children can participate in School Readiness programs that provide a wide array of prekindergarten activities in collaboration with other early childhood and community programs. Funding for School Readiness was about \$10 million in 2001 and reached 43,030 children.

The state of Minnesota also allocated almost \$19 million to supplement federal funding (\$59 million) for Head Start programs in 2000, with about 13,300 children and their families participating in comprehensive education, health and social services. However, according to a state report, only 45 percent of eligible children and their families received Head Start services. Some of these eligible children between the ages of 3 1/2 to 5 years who didn't receive help from Head Start participated in School Readiness programs. However, it is unlikely that participation of high-needs children in a lower-cost, less comprehensive program demonstrated the returns available in a part- to full-day, long-term program.

We propose that the Minnesota state government create the Minnesota Foundation for Early Childhood Development to fill the gap between the funds currently available for ECFE, School Readiness and Head Start and the amount necessary to fully fund a high-quality program for all 3- and 4-year-old children living in poverty in Minnesota. A one-time \$1.5 billion outlay would create an endowment that could support ECDPs on an annual basis. The foundation would receive donations from government, private foundations, individuals and businesses. With the foundation's funds invested in corporate AAA bonds, earning about 7 percent per year, we estimate that the \$195 million in annual earnings would cover the yearly costs required to fully fund comprehensive, high-quality ECDPs for all children from low-income families in Minnesota (see Table 2).

The *Minnesota Foundation for Early Childhood Development* would provide funding for well-supported and highly effective ECDPs, whether supplementing funds for an existing Head Start center or helping start a new program. The Foundation

would provide additional resources to enhance existing programs, such as boost teacher qualification and compensation, reduce teacher-student ratios and expand curriculum resources. Furthermore, the Foundation would provide start-up funds for new ECDPs to help reach all eligible children.

We contend that funding for ECDPs should reach the level of model program status, such as the Perry School program, since this is the level at which high returns have been demonstrated. Well-funded ECDPs would ensure that all teachers have a degree in early childhood education and are paid at a level that keeps turnover to a minimum. Furthermore, ECDPs would maintain low student-to-teacher ratios and use high-quality curriculum materials. Funds should also be allocated for research to track the improvement of participating children and identify where additional support may be needed. Participation in these programs should be voluntary, but incentives may be provided for families to participate. ECDPs should work effectively with parents and include them in the education process with their children.

Conclusion

The conventional view of economic development typically includes company headquarters, office towers, entertainment centers, and professional sports stadiums and arenas. In this paper, we have argued that in the future any proposed economic development list should have early childhood development at the top. The return on investment from early childhood development is extraordinary, resulting in better working public schools, more educated workers and less crime. A \$1.5 billion investment to create the Minnesota Foundation for Early Childhood Development would go a long way toward ensuring that children from low-income families are ready to learn by the time they reach kindergarten.

Granted that in today's tight fiscal environment, \$1.5 billion is a particularly large sum which may mean we can't fully fund the program immediately. But we should be able to fully fund the endowment over the next five years. After measuring the public impact on the quality of life that such a foundation can provide, the costs of not making such an investment are just too great to ignore. ■

Fact Sheets

The Benefits of High-Quality Pre-K

Research has shown that children in high-quality pre-K programs are more likely to be ready for school, have better school readiness skills, and experience fewer behavioral problems. They also benefit from the benefits of high-quality, pre-kindergarten.

Successful Students

Pre-K children are more likely to read on time.

Children who attended a pre-K program were 4 percent more likely to be able to read by age 5 than those who did not have pre-K. (Source: Chicago Longitudinal Study)

Pre-K children do better on standardized tests.

Math and literacy skills of children who had attended pre-K prior to the state literacy and math assessment test at higher rates than their peers who had no pre-K. (Source: "State Efforts to Evaluate the Effects of Pre-K Programs," Yale University Child Study Center)

Pre-K reduces grade repetition.

More than 50% of children who attended pre-K were 11 percent less likely to have repeated a grade than their peers who did not attend pre-K. (Source: "State Efforts to Evaluate the Effects of Pre-K Programs," Yale University Child Study Center)

Pre-K reduces the number of children placed in special education.

Among Chicago children, those who attended pre-K were 11 percent less likely to require special education services than their peers who did not attend. (Source: Chicago Longitudinal Study)

Responsible Adults

Pre-K reduces the need for child care.

Chicago children who did not attend pre-K were 10 percent more likely to be selected for a violent crime by age 10 than their peers who had been pre-K participants. (Source: Chicago Longitudinal Study)

Pre-K reduces the need for child care.

More than 50% of children who attended pre-K were 10 percent less likely to be selected for a violent crime by age 10 than their peers who did not attend pre-K. (Source: Chicago Longitudinal Study)

Pre-K reduces the need for child care.

More than 50% of children who attended pre-K were 10 percent less likely to be selected for a violent crime by age 10 than their peers who did not attend pre-K. (Source: Chicago Longitudinal Study)

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More than 50% of children who attended pre-K were 10 percent less likely to be selected for a violent crime by age 10 than their peers who did not attend pre-K. (Source: Chicago Longitudinal Study)

Stronger Communities

Available for up to 100 employees with up to \$100,000 in revenue.

Pre-K Now also provides training for teachers and parents. For more information, contact the National Center for Education Policy, 1775 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Source: "Pre-K Now: A Proven Educational Program," RAND Corporation, "The High Scope Early Childhood Program."

Pre-K Now is an early childhood program in the District of Columbia.

Children who attend pre-K at Head Start centers had significantly higher scores on reading, math, and problem-solving and planning activities, all of which are key skills for school success. Source: "The Head Start Early Childhood Longitudinal Study," U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Pre-K Now

1775 M Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 202-336-7277
E-mail: prek@nieer.org

For more information on the Pre-K Now website, visit <http://www.preknow.org> or call 202-336-7277.

Children Benefit from High Quality PPK

- **Increased Educational Success**
 - Less grade repetition
 - Less special education
 - Improved social behavior and cognitive
 - Higher high school graduation rates
- **Increased Life Success**
 - Lower teenage pregnancy rates
 - Less involvement in crime
 - Higher employment and earnings

www.preknow.org

Society Benefits from High-Quality PPK

- **More productive workforce**
- **Increased competitiveness**
- **Reduced crime**
- **Increased school achievement**
- **Significant return on investment**
 - Savings in K-12 costs
 - Savings in social services costs
 - Savings in crime costs
 - Increased tax revenue

www.preknow.org

Public Returns of Pre-K

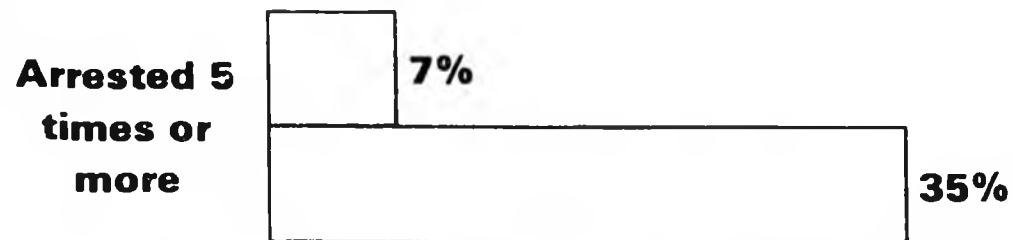
Cost Savings per \$1 Invested

Perry Preschool	\$17
Abecedarian	\$4
Chicago Child Parent Centers	\$7

Includes savings from less welfare usage, decreased crime and incarceration costs, and higher participant productivity/earnings

Arrested 5 times or more

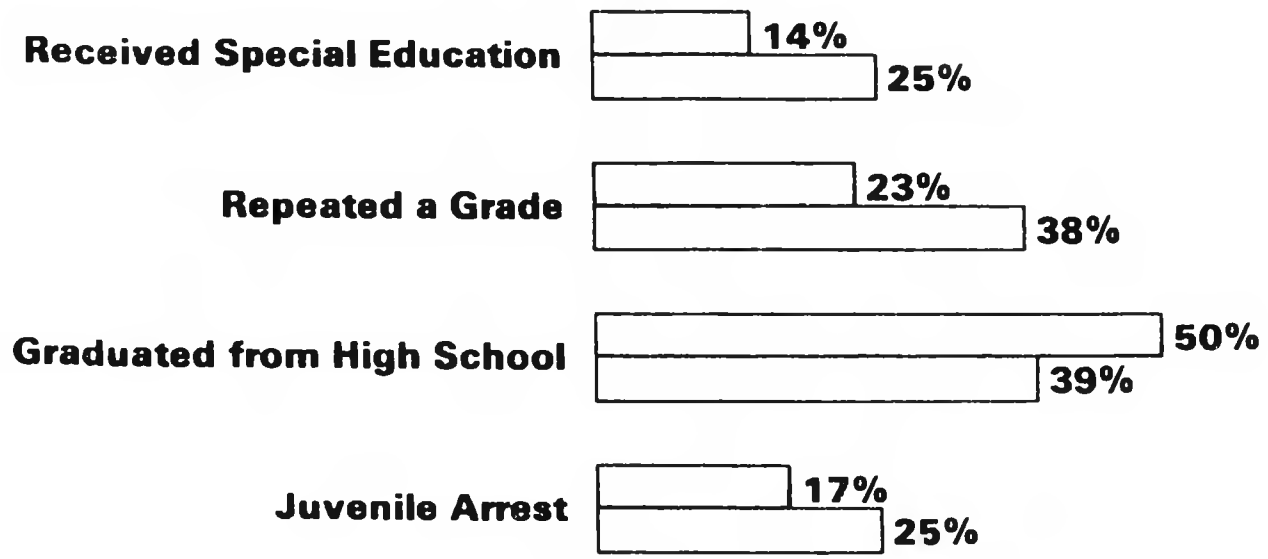
- Program Group
- No Program Group



Source: Fight Crime: Invest in Kids

2. Program Group's Benefits at 1800 Days

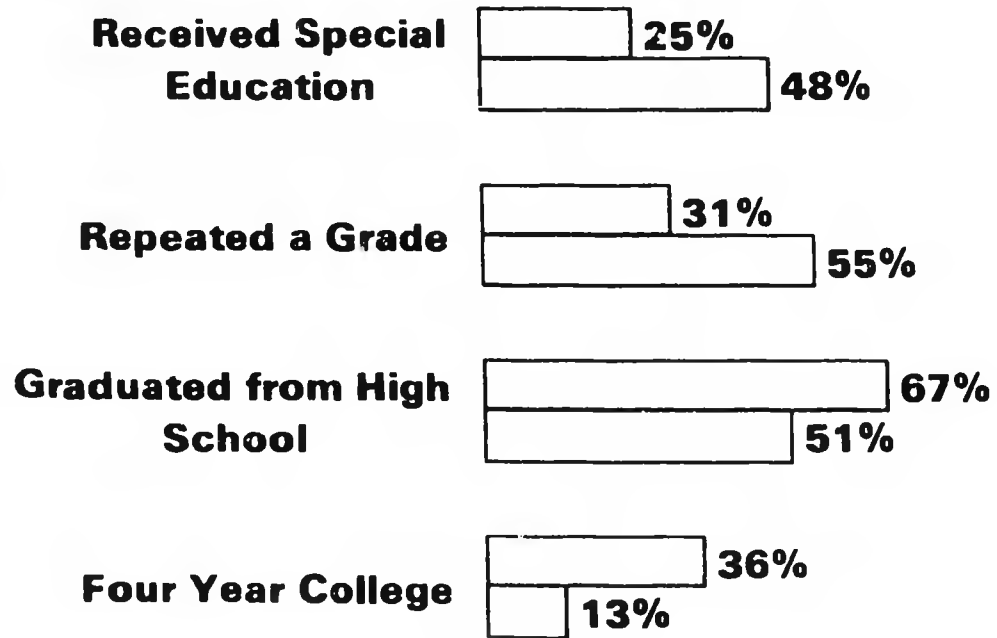
- Program Group
- No Program Group



Source: National Institute for Early Education Research

Number of Academic Difficulties

- Program Group
- No Program Group



Source: National Institute for Early Education Research

A SUMMARIZED ECONOMIC IMPACT REPORT ON
EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILD CARE SERVICES IN
ALASKA

step^{up} early ed & child care

Based on the McDowell Group Report July 2006



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STUDY FINDINGS ARE DETAILED
ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES:

<i>Demographics</i>	Pg. 2
<i>The Economic Impact on Alaska</i>	Pg. 3
<i>The Early Learning and Child Care Sector</i>	Pg. 5
<i>Impact on Alaska Families</i>	Pg. 7
<i>Alaskans Support Funding</i>	Pg. 9

Why should you care about the availability of quality early education and child care in Alaska? Because stepping up early education for our children is critical for all of us.

LET US STEP YOU THROUGH THE FACTS.

- 1 Early childhood education and child care play a critical and measurable role in Alaska's economy
- 2 The availability of quality, affordable child care remains a challenge for many Alaska families
- 3 Alaskans across the state place a high priority on state funding for early education and child care

Until recently, there was no data specific to Alaska to demonstrate how the welfare of our youngest community members impacts the entire state – both in the short term and long term. But thanks to this study commissioned by the System for Early Education Development (SEED) and completed in July 2006 by McDowell Group, there is now local information to combine with the knowledge learned from national studies to provide an accurate baseline. What the statistics demonstrate is that Alaska lags behind much of the country in providing quality early education and child care to our residents. And while there are certainly entities working hard throughout Alaska to provide quality care for our children, Alaska remains one of only 10 states without a state-funded, statewide early childhood education system.

ALASKA IS ONE OF ONLY 10 STATES WITHOUT A STATE-FUNDED, STATEWIDE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SYSTEM.

"Investment in early childhood development programs brings a real (that is, inflation-adjusted) public return of 12%, and a real total return, public and private, of 16%. We are unaware of any other economic development effort that has such a public return ..."

ART ROLNICK
SVP AND DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH
FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF MINNEAPOLIS

LONG-TERM ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF QUALITY EARLY EDUCATION & CHILD CARE

A host of studies have been done to track the long-term economic impact of high quality early child care development on society. Though none of these studies focuses on Alaska, the implications for Alaska are relevant. The results of these studies have shown conclusively that although investment is required to provide quality early care to infants, toddlers and youths, the rate of return far exceeds that initial investment.

The largest benefit provided by quality early care was increased earnings capacity projected from higher educational attainment, along with higher taxes paid from better paying jobs. Other benefits are lower criminal justice system costs, reduced welfare costs, savings for crime victims, and savings on school remedial services budgets. The results of several studies are highlighted below.

LONG-TERM BENEFITS OF EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILD CARE



29% higher high school graduation rates



20% higher college attendance



70% lower crime incidence



20% lower welfare dependence



\$143,000 additional earned income per capita, resulting from better employment

Studies also note that expenditures on education that are focused on K-12 may be misplaced given that brains develop rapidly in the early years (0-4), then develop at a much slower pace from age 4 through 18. The implication is that the earlier the investment in early education, the higher the return on investment will be.

step 3

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CHILD CARE PLAY A CRITICAL AND MEASURABLE ROLE IN ALASKA'S ECONOMY.

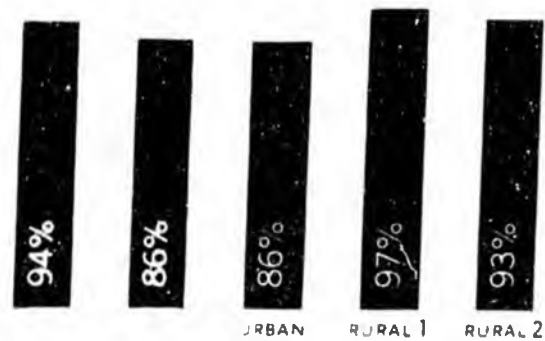


9 of 10 alaskans support funding

The telephone survey described earlier also asked all households a series of questions about state funding support for early learning and child care services in Alaska. Results showed overwhelming support for the funding of early education and child care.

Nearly nine out of 10 Alaska residents (87 percent) think it is important or very important for state government to provide financial support for early education and child care. Among residents with children under six years of age, 94 percent think state support is important or very important. Even among residents without young children, 86 percent think state financial support is important or very important. Further, urban and rural residents alike feel it is important to provide funding for early education and child care.

THOSE STATING IT IS "IMPORTANT" OR "VERY IMPORTANT" FOR STATE GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT.



audiences who expressed above average support for early education and child care

Alaskans were also asked if the state should give early learning and child care high, medium or low funding priority. Two-thirds (66%) feel it should have high priority. A variety of population subgroups were more likely to give it a high priority. They include

- 76% of those with children under 6
- 72% of those with children 6-12
- 77% of those with children 13-17
- 76% of those with children 18-24
- 73% of those with children 25-34





BEST BEGINNINGS

Alaska's Early Childhood Investment

Alaska Ready to Read, Ready to Learn

*Task Force Report
and Recommendations*

September 2006



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task Force Report & Recommendations

Too many of our children are failing in school. The problem begins before age 6. As a result, almost half of Alaska children begin school unprepared to read or learn. They are set up for failure.

Common sense and science tell us we can do much better in preparing young children to be ready to read and ready to learn. It is a societal imperative and our obligation as Alaska's stewards to give our children the opportunity to succeed. Nothing else we do will have a more positive impact on Alaska's economic and social health.

The Alaska Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task Force has charted a course for success in this report. During deliberations, the 27 members learned:

- Almost half of Alaska children enter school unprepared to read or learn. This is not the child's failure. Society – parents, educators, politicians and professionals – must accept responsibility.
- Scientific research shows critical brain development occurs between birth and age 6. Children are born ready, willing and able to learn.
- Investments in early childhood literacy and learning pay dividend many times over. Children will be more successful in school, be less likely to get into trouble, grow into more productive adults, and contribute to the common good of society. The bottom line: Every dollar invested in quality early learning programs will return \$7 to \$17.
- Alaska lags far behind most states in addressing early childhood literacy and learning issues.

The Task Force – business, civic nonprofit, philanthropic, education and government leaders – met from November 2005 through the summer of 2006. In developing their recommendations, Task Force members were advised by Alaska and national experts in early childhood education.

The recommendations lay the foundation for success. There is much work to do and a role for everyone.





INTRODUCTION

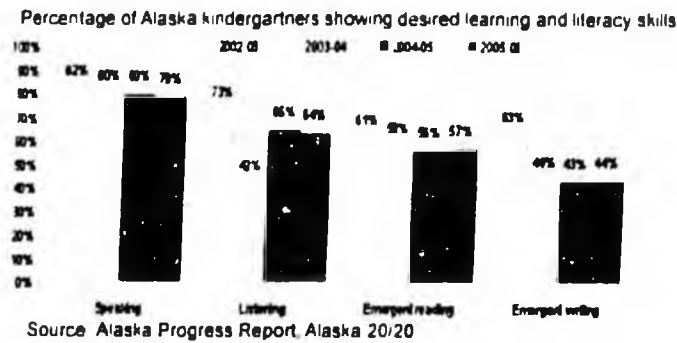
Goal: Every child in Alaska arrives at school ready to read and ready to learn.

“If you look critically at the failure in our educational system, you must conclude that the child’s failure and the school’s failure are largely determined before the child enters the educational system at age 6.”

– Irving Harris, former CEO, Procter & Gamble

The Problem

Alaska’s young children have joined a disturbing national trend. They are entering school less and less prepared to succeed. This is cause for alarm and action. A battery of studies and data reinforce what parents instinctively know: An ill-prepared child is far more likely to fail in school and become a burden on society. Declining pre-kindergarten trends contribute to Alaska’s low scores on standardized third-grade tests, poor performance on the High School Graduation Qualification Exams and an unacceptably high dropout rate.



The Growing Momentum

Concerned Alaskans met in August 2004 and May 2005 to discuss early childhood literacy and learning. At the May 2005 meeting, Gov. Frank Murkowski embraced the importance of the initiative and supported formation of a grassroots task force. Twenty-seven statewide leaders were assembled to draft a blueprint identifying what Alaskans could and should do to improve school readiness in young children. This report is their response. During the past seven months, the Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task Force has immersed itself in this foundational issue. It has sought advice from national and Alaska experts, and has digested a large amount of data and research to develop a plan that will work in every community in the state. The plan for success is contained in this report.

Most Alaskans agree there’s a critical need to invest in young children. A report commissioned by the System for Early Education Development (SEED), *“Economic Impact of Early Education and Child Care Services in Alaska,”* found 87 percent of Alaskans surveyed thought early learning and child care were high priorities – higher than state funding for road construction, local government or university education. Only K-12 education rated higher.

Why this age group?

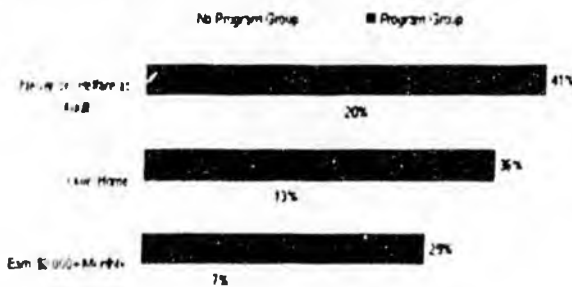
Recent research demonstrates what parents and early childhood educators have known for years: A critical period for brain development occurs between birth and age 6. Parents who read, tell stories and have positive daily interactions with their young child promote the child's brain development. Quality child care and early education do the same. Children gain the skills and confidence they need to succeed from these positive early experiences.

Why is this problem growing?

Many factors contribute to this problem. Parents often don't have the tools or resources they need. Being an effective parent takes skills often passed from generation to generation. Alaskans, a highly mobile and migrant population, are frequently

separated from this rich source of parenting knowledge. Those who do have access to extended family may still struggle. An increasing need for families to earn multiple incomes places a premium on time, energy and other prerequisites for effective parenting. Also, quality early care and education is not affordable for many parents. Investing time and money in young children can counter this growing problem.

Title: Economic Effects of Perry Preschool Program by Age 27



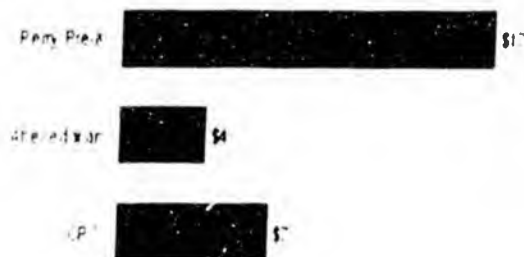
Source: National Institute for Early Education Research

Why is this my problem?

This trend impacts everyone, not just children and their families. Credible long term studies such as the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project, the Carolina Abecedarian Project and Chicago's Child-Parent Centers (CPC) demonstrate children who are in quality early learning programs have higher literacy skills, increased graduation rates and better attitudes toward school. These children also grow into adults who are

less likely to commit crimes or require welfare assistance, and who earn higher salaries.

Title: Economic Returns of Pre-K: Government Dollars Saved per Government Dollars Invested on Pre-K: Three Case Studies



Source: Frick et al. 2005

Our children need to acquire the skills to make them successful in life. They represent Alaska's future as parents, employees, employers, citizens and leaders. It is imperative to increase the number of children arriving in kindergarten who are ready to read and learn.

"Today a reader, tomorrow a leader."

Margaret Fuller, journalist



Increase the professional development opportunities and qualifications for early childhood educators and provide appropriate compensation.

Early educators need greater access to professional development offered through a variety of delivery systems. These must address the challenges faced by providers across the state, whether in rural or urban communities, such as long workdays, inflexible schedules and too few opportunities to access training.

Based on significant research, many states support increased wages for child care providers to improve recruitment and retention. Most importantly, it improves child outcomes. Alaska should do likewise.

Develop a statewide system of voluntary and affordable early childhood education.

Thirty eight states have implemented a model of state funded pre kindergarten, not including Head Start. (Alaska is not one of them.) These states provide funding for pre-kindergarten in a variety of ways and utilize approaches that meet their needs within financial and political constraints.

The Task Force recommends Alaska develop a system of affordable and voluntary early childhood education. Such a system could provide handsome returns on the investment.

The Task Force further recommends community-based discussion to design a system that is effective in both urban and rural areas. To begin shaping that discussion, the Task Force has identified elements key to the design of any system. They are:

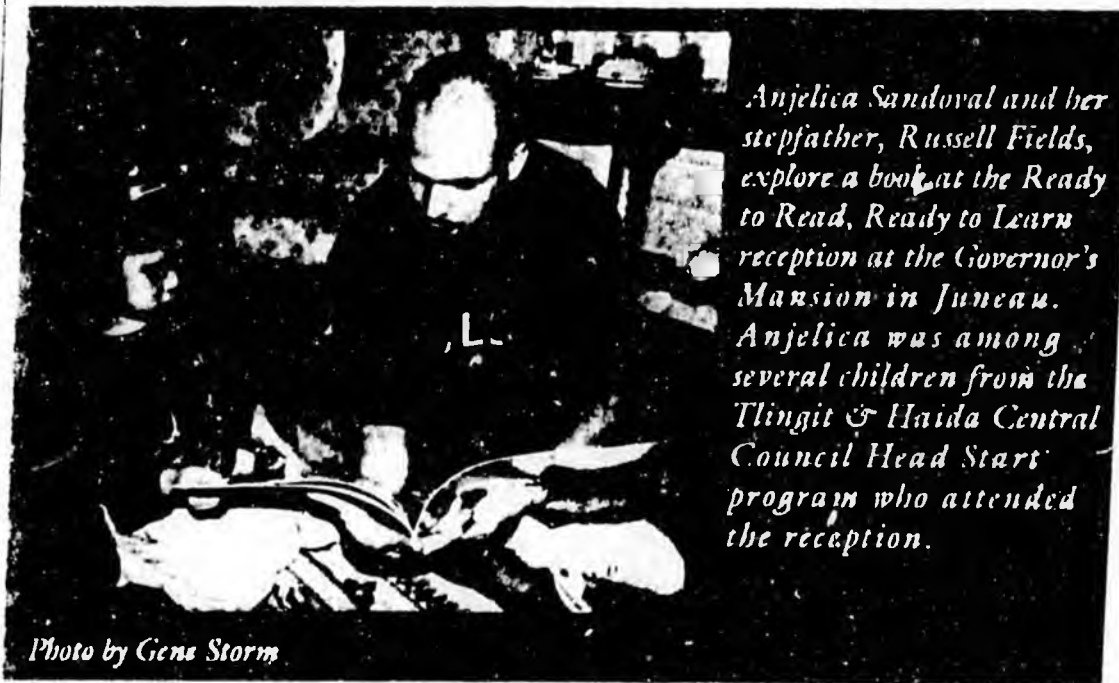
- The approach is voluntary and parents retain the choice of whether to have their children participate.
- Families can select a pre-kindergarten program from available choices, including those privately owned, faith-based, run by the community, operated by nonprofit organizations or are part of public school systems.
- Local leaders and families actively participate in developing effective pre-kindergarten options.
- Families are provided with financial support or incentives.
- The system is phased in to allow communities and programs time to ensure appropriate planning.

Government

The Federal Reserve Bank study shows the economic impact of supporting early learning and how government can save money by investing in young children. The SEED report shows the public overwhelmingly supports government investment in early childhood education. The State of Alaska has committed funding to support the Ready to Read, Ready to Learn recommendations. Government at every level must recognize supporting early childhood learning is a good investment. For example, publicly funded libraries are a mainstay in early literacy and learning. Children who have the ability to learn and succeed will contribute to the long-term economic and civic vitality of their local communities and Alaska.

Faith-Based Community

Alaska's faith based community plays an important role for young children and their families through child care, early learning programs and support for families. These efforts will ensure more children will arrive at school ready to read and learn.



Anjelica Sandoval and her stepfather, Russell Fields, explore a book at the Ready to Read, Ready to Learn reception at the Governor's Mansion in Juneau. Anjelica was among several children from the Tlingit & Haida Central Council Head Start program who attended the reception.

Photo by Gena Storm



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Effects of early intervention on intellectual and academic achievement: A follow-up study of children from low-income families. Campbell, F. A. & Ramey, C. T. (1994).

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Lives in the balance: Age 27 benefit cost analysis of the High/Scope Perry Preschool Program. Barnett, W. S. Ypsilanti. (1996).

Significant benefits: The High/Scope Perry Preschool study through age 27. Schweinhart, L. J., Barnes, H. V., & Weikart, D. P. Ypsilanti. (1993).

The State of Preschool 2005 State Preschool Yearbook. W. Steven Barnett, Ph.D., Jason T. Hustedt, Ph.D., Kenneth B. Robin, Psy.D., and Karen L. Schulman, M.P.P.

Online Resources

Born Learning

bornlearning.org

Children's Defense Fund

childrensdefense.org

Every Child Matters

everychildmatters.org

Minneapolis Federal Reserve

minneapolisfed.org/research/studies/earlychild

Mind in the Making

mindinthemaking.org

National Governor's Association

nag.org

National Institute for Early Education Research

nieer.org

Pre-K Now

preknow.org

Qualistar Early Learning

corra.org

Smart Start North Carolina

smartstart.nc.org

State of Alaska's Early Learning Guidelines

educ.state.ak.us

State of Alaska, DHSS, Division of Public

Assistance, Child Care Program Office

hss.state.ak.us/dpa/programs/ccare

System for Early Education Development

seed.alaska.edu

Talaris Research Institute

talaris.org

Thrive by Five

thrivebyfive.wa.org

Voices for America's Children

voices.org

Zero to Three

zerotothree.org

"Story Time" - Special thanks!



A special thank you to Barbara Lavallee for making available the use of her artwork "Story Time" for the Ready to Read, Ready to Learn logo. This work pictures what Alaskans desire to see: parents and young children engaged in reading and learning together. Reading or storytelling is the central subject of much of her art. Other works by the artist can be seen online at: artqued.com/artists/bio_artist/

NIEER

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR
EARLY EDUCATION RESEARCH

The State of Preschool 2006

STATE PRESCHOOL YEARBOOK

The National Institute for Early Education Research
is pleased to announce the release of the
State of Preschool 2006 Yearbook of Research



Alaska

NO PROGRAM

Although Alaska does not have a state-funded prekindergarten program, the state has provided a supplement to federal Head Start programs since the 1980s. State funding through this initiative is available to any federally recognized Head Start program in Alaska, and totaled more than \$6 million during the 2005-2006 school year. These funds are primarily targeted toward quality improvement through professional development and school readiness activities. Wherever possible, remaining funds are used to serve additional children and families by creating new Head Start slots. In 2005-2006, an estimated 538 children were served in state-funded Head Start slots, approximately 525 of whom were ages 3 and 4.

ACCESS RANKING-4s

ACCESS RANKING-3s

RESOURCES RANKING

No Program



Email Address

Resource Center

- 1. Research Reports
- 2. State Profiles
- 3. Mapping Tools
- 4. Model Development Tools
- 5. Abstracts
- 6. Press Releases
- 7. Research Publications
- 8. Reports on NIEER's Impact
- 9. Highlights from "Voice Counts"

Alaska Snapshot

Quality

Each year, the National Early Childhood Education Report of NIEER reports on the quality of the early childhood programs. This report includes the number of early childhood programs that met the quality benchmark for NIEER's quality benchmark and the number of children in those programs. See more about the NIEER State Preschool Yearbook.

Number of NIEER quality benchmark criteria met: 7

Notes: Alaska is a state that is not included in the National Early Childhood Education Report. The data for Alaska is based on the information provided by the state. See more about the NIEER State Preschool Yearbook.

Availability

Each year, the National Early Childhood Education Report of NIEER reports on the availability of early childhood programs. This report includes the number of early childhood programs that are open to the public and the number of children in those programs. See more about the NIEER State Preschool Yearbook.

Percentage of four-year olds in public pre-k: 3

Notes: Alaska is a state that is not included in the National Early Childhood Education Report. The data for Alaska is based on the information provided by the state. See more about the NIEER State Preschool Yearbook.

Public Enrollment

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State of Enrollment

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Pre-K Now Reacts to Research on Pre-K Expulsions

Pre-K Now issued a press release today regarding the findings of a new study by the Department of Psychology at the University of California, Berkeley, which found that children who are expelled from pre-k are more likely to be expelled from school in later years. See more about the study.

read the full statement

Expanding Pre-K Evidence

See more about the findings of a new study by the Department of Psychology at the University of California, Berkeley, which found that children who are expelled from pre-k are more likely to be expelled from school in later years. See more about the study.

Photo: iStockphoto.com

Key Policymaker Support	No
Legislative or Ballot Measure Activity	No
Funding	Yes
Advocacy	Yes
Business Community Support	No
Media Coverage	No
Governance	No
Teacher Professional Development	No
Pre-K-to-All	No

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Testimony re: HB 306

Dirk Shumaker
Executive Director
Kids' Corps, Inc.
1840 S. Bragaw, Suite 210
Anchorage, AK 99508

Thank you for this opportunity to provide brief written testimony re: HB 306.

96% of the children enrolled in the Anchorage Head Start program where I work live in poverty. For all too many of these children, a so-called "achievement gap" already separates them from their better off peers and threatens to diminish their chances for success in school and life.

Through my long association with Kids' Corps Head Start programs, I have seen the benefits that young children and families gain through participation in a high quality early learning program. These gains—carefully observed and measured over the program year by trained staff and consultants—include significant progress in such school readiness domains as letter recognition and early literacy, vocabulary, math, fine motor coordination and most importantly, social-emotional development.

Unfortunately, every year our particular Head Start program receives hundreds of applications for children and families we cannot serve. Some cannot enroll because we do not have space at our centers for all the children who are eligible. Others do not qualify because their parents' earnings, although often very low, still exceed Head Start poverty level income requirements. And, because Alaska is one of the handful of states that lack a state funded pre-kindergarten program, these families who are not eligible for Head Start have few affordable pre-k options available for their children.

By establishing an affordable, voluntary, quality pre-kindergarten program that serves low income families first, the state of Alaska would take an important step in increasing the odds of educational success for thousands of children. No one claims that even the best pre-k program alone will dramatically raise 3rd grade reading scores or high school graduation rates. However, volumes of research do show that a state pre-k program that is aligned with quality standards like Alaska's Early Learning Guidelines and that is coordinated with successful, established programs can play a critically important role in helping Alaska achieve these goals.

Sincerely,

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