

**ACCESS SACRAMENTO****Early Education****Advocacy Issues Background****Issues**

California is home to almost 13 percent of the nation's young low-income children, and low-income children are least likely to have access to an early learning program. Recent research by the RAND Corporation shows that high-quality preschool can help close the achievement gap, therefore helping students thrive in K-12 and attend college. The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce recognizes that in order to be successful in a 21st century workforce, children must have access to high quality early education, which serves as a foundation for everything achieved in K-12, college and the real world. High quality preschool provides an excellent return on investment as it saves government spending on K-12 education, public assistance and the criminal justice system and increases tax revenues as a result of higher earnings.

**Minimize Cuts to Early Education**

The state is facing unprecedented fiscal hardship, including cuts to children's health and K-12 education. The Chamber recommends keeping kids front and center as you make these difficult choices regarding the state budget.

**Use Existing Resources to Create a More Efficient and Coordinated System**

To gain the most benefit from the resources that are available, there is an opportunity to restructure the way in which children are allocated to the available spaces in order to achieve greater benefits. According to a RAND report, one recommendation is to first serve the children who can benefit most.

**Maximize Federal Opportunities to Support Early Education**

The American Recovery & Reinvestment Act includes more than \$5 billion for early care and education, of which at least \$5 million may come to California. We need leadership at the state level to ensure California is maximizing these federal funding opportunities.

**Promote Increased Accountability for Student Performance and Learning Outcomes**

Investment in a comprehensive education data system, as proposed by the consulting firm McKinsey's *Framework for a Comprehensive Education Data System in California*, will help manage cost effective outcomes from our publicly funded education system. By creating a Statewide Education Data Governing Board we can develop a high quality system that will be invaluable as we work to make smart and cost-effective choices that will actually change student outcomes and inform program decisions. (Support SB 19)

# **Ensure Strategic and Sensible Budget Cuts**

## **-BACKGROUND-**

Immediate budget cuts are necessary and appropriate to help address the fiscal crisis. However, the state should refrain from complete elimination of the Healthy Families program, which is critical to mitigating and ensuring the state's long-term investment in educating a 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce. Many of the proposals include severe cuts to programs that support the children and families in greatest need, which will be a tremendous loss to the well being of our children and future workforce.

## **Use Existing Resources to Create a More Efficient System**

### **-BACKGROUND-**

In the absence of new resources available to early education, it is imperative that our state develop a more efficient and coordinated system that will effectively provide our early learners with quality education. The latest RAND study makes the following recommendation to effectively utilize existing resources:

- Ensure high-quality programs are available for the children who need it most;
- Measure and monitor quality programs and provide higher reimbursements to providers who achieve higher quality;
- Create a well-designed, coordinated plan to prepare teachers; and
- Advance toward a more efficient and coordinated educational system.

## **Maximize Federal Funding Opportunities to Support Early Education**

### **-BACKGROUND-**

President Obama has called early education the first pillar of reforming schools and challenged states to develop plans to prepare children for success by the time they enter kindergarten. He has called for recent investments in the federal American Recovery & Reinvestment Act and the proposed Fiscal Year 2010 budget "down payments" on his commitment to support young children and their parents. These federal policy developments present a major opportunity to fulfill the hopes and potential of millions of vulnerable California children and families during challenging budget times in our state. It is critical that policymakers in California, home to almost 13 percent of the nation's young low-income children, make investments, develop policies and utilize federal funding to strengthen California's high-quality early education system.

# Promote Increased Accountability for Student Performance and Learning Outcomes

## -BACKGROUND-

McKinsey's *Framework for a Comprehensive Education Data System in California* (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/pc/documents/yr08mckinsey1218.pdf>) reports that data is important so that all education stakeholders would have the information they need for regularly improving the education system:

- Students and parents have easy access to accurate information about local schools that they use to make decisions about enrollment and course selections, among many other important decisions;
- Classroom teachers are able to share their best ideas with colleagues throughout the state, unimpeded by geography;
- State policymakers can reliably tell which programs are making the biggest difference for students, and use that information to inform funding decisions;
- Researchers use data, in a way that preserves privacy, to rigorously answer critical questions about what works without unnecessary administrative barriers and delays;
- Taxpayers have visibility into the education system's finances, operations, and successes.

The report provides the following recommendations:

- California should **continue building the longitudinal student and teacher data systems** that are currently underway
- Starting immediately, California should **enhance the quality, accessibility, completeness and basic use** of its current K-12 data systems
- Next, California should **expand the use of that information and data** by building more advanced systems
- Lastly, California should **create interagency linkages to better inform decisions** using data beyond K-12.

**SUPPORT SB 19 Education Data System (Simitian)** – Authorizes the state's Chief Information Officer to use federal grant funds received pursuant the American Recovery Act of 2009 to convene a working group representing specified entities to create a strategic plan to link education data systems and to accomplish specified objectives relating to the accessibility of education data.

# The Business Case for Early Learning



## American Competitiveness in Peril: The Case for a Complete and Competitive Education

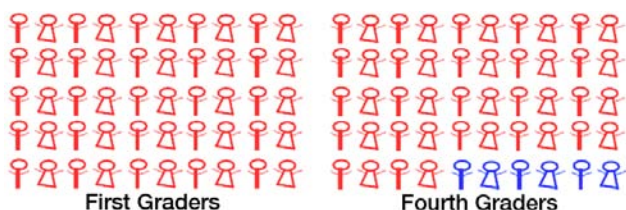
- By failing to address early childhood development, we are jeopardizing our own future. In a globally competitive workplace, we can no longer allow children to enter school unprepared to learn and to succeed.
- A well-educated, qualified workforce is the cornerstone of a vibrant economy and prosperous communities. High-quality preschool helps cultivate that skilled workforce by giving young children a solid foundation in critical early social and academic skills.
- We are already falling behind other countries. The U.S. ranks 26 out of 32 countries in Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) math scores.
- Each year, 120,000 Californians reach age 20 without a high school diploma, costing the state \$46.4 billion over a lifetime – and depriving us of the talented workforce that drives innovation and fuels our economic growth.



## Kids who Start Behind Stay Behind

Studies show that far too many children are entering kindergarten unprepared, and that a wide gap exists between lower- and higher-income children, even before they enter kindergarten.

- By the time they are four years old, children growing up in poor families have been exposed to 32 million fewer spoken words than those whose parents are professionals.
- Of 50 children who have trouble reading in first grade, 44 will still have trouble in fourth grade.



- Only about half of low-income children attend preschool, while 80 percent of children whose families make more than \$100,000 attend. Even fewer low-income children are in high-quality preschools – about 13 percent are in programs that develop language and higher-order thinking skills that prepare them for school.

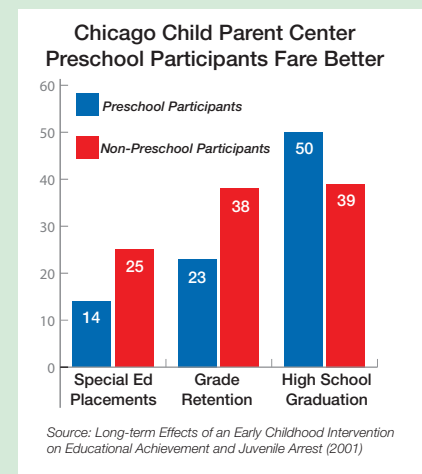
## Brain Development Research Supports Early Intervention

- Learning begins at birth: Early experiences shape a child's brain development and lay the foundation for all future learning, behavior and success.
- The brain is like any other muscle: It must be used to become – and stay – healthy.

## Quality Early Learning is a Proven Investment in School Success

Early childhood education gets kids ready to learn during their most formative years. National research shows that children who attend high-quality preschool programs:

- perform better on standardized tests in reading and math;
- are less likely to be placed in special education;
- are less likely to be held back a grade; and
- are more likely to graduate from high school and attend college.



# Business Leaders Recognize Preschool is a Smart Public Investment



## Get Involved: Become a Preschool Champion

- Ask for a tour of a high-quality early learning program in your area.
- Policymakers and candidates, particularly our next governor, have the power to move early learning policy. Contact them to voice your support for high-quality preschool.
- Sponsor a briefing to spread the word about preschool's benefits to colleagues and policymakers.
- Sign a letter to the editor or an op-ed.
- Learn more about the business case for high-quality early learning on our website at [www.preschoolcalifornia.org/business](http://www.preschoolcalifornia.org/business).

*“The best way to improve the American workforce of the 21st century is to invest in early education, to ensure that even the most disadvantaged children have the opportunity to succeed alongside their more advantaged peers.”*

— James J. Heckman 2000 Nobel Laureate in Economics

- If the U.S. had closed the achievement gap between low-income students and others a decade ago, gross domestic product in 2008 would have been \$400 billion to \$670 billion higher, according to a recent McKinsey & Co. report.

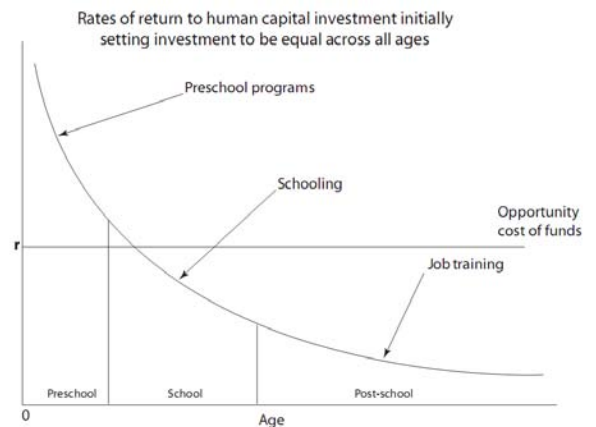
## Early Investments = Higher Returns

- Economic research shows that the earlier we make investments, the greater our return will be.

- In cost-benefit analyses, economists have found high-quality early childhood education offers one of the highest returns of any public investment -- \$7 to \$16 for every dollar spent. It saves

government spending on K-12 education, public assistance and the criminal justice system, and increases tax revenues as a result of higher earnings.

- A preschool program targeted at children in the poorest families in California would begin to pay for itself within six years.



Source: Heckman, J. *Investing in Disadvantaged Young Children in an Economically Efficient Policy* (2006)

## Supporting Today's Workforce

In addition to being a proven long-term investment that stimulates long-term economic growth, high-quality early care and education allows parents to go to work secure that their children are in safe, nurturing environments. Employers

find that good early childhood programs reduce absenteeism and increase productivity, recruitment and retention of employees.

**Join us in ensuring California's children are prepared to succeed in school, contribute to a strong economy and build thriving communities.**

Sources for all research cited in this document are available at [www.preschoolcalifornia.org/business](http://www.preschoolcalifornia.org/business)

For more information, visit [www.preschoolcalifornia.org](http://www.preschoolcalifornia.org)



414 13th Street, Suite 500  
Oakland, CA 94612  
(510) 271-0075 T  
(510) 271-0707 F

# Federal Landscape: Early Learning Opportunities for California



This is a historic moment for our youngest children, and for early childhood education in America. President Obama has called early education the first pillar of reforming schools and challenged states to develop plans to prepare children for success by the time they enter kindergarten. He's called recent investments in the federal recovery act and the proposed FY 2010 budget "down payments" on his commitment to support young children and their parents.

These federal policy developments present a major opportunity to fulfill the hopes and potential of millions of vulnerable California children and families during challenging budget times in our state. It is critical that policymakers in California, home to almost 13 percent of the nation's young low-income children, make investments, develop policies and utilize federal funding to strengthen California's high-quality early learning system.

## The President's Early Learning Promise

President Obama has a comprehensive Zero to Five plan that offers significant opportunities for states to fund and improve early childhood education through initiatives including:

- creating a Early Learning Challenge Fund to help states create or expand high-quality early care and education programs for children from birth to age five;
- quadrupling the number of children in Early Head Start;
- working to ensure all kids have access to preschool;
- providing affordable, high-quality child care to promote child development and ease the burdens of working families; and
- creating a Presidential Early Learning Council to increase collaboration and program coordination across federal, state and local levels.

## Early Education in the Economic Recovery Package

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) passed by Congress and signed by President Obama includes more than \$5 billion in early care and education funding that creates new jobs, gets families back to work and gives California an opportunity to invest in early education programs. California policymakers must act quickly and thoughtfully to invest in effective programs that help close the achievement gap and fuel the long-term economic health of our communities.

### Early Education: A Priority for President Obama

"It will be the goal of this administration to ensure that every child has access to a complete and competitive education – from the day they are born to the day they begin a career... We have dramatically expanded early childhood education and will continue to improve its quality, because we know that the most formative learning comes in those first years of life."

-President Barack Obama, in a February 24 address to joint session of Congress

"I'm issuing a challenge to our states: Develop a cutting-edge plan to raise the quality of your early learning programs; show us how you'll work to ensure that children are better prepared for success by the time they enter kindergarten. If you do, we will support you with an Early Learning Challenge Grant that I call on Congress to enact. That's how we will reward quality and incentivize excellence, and make a down payment on the success of the next generation."

-President Obama, in remarks to the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce on March 10



# Federal Efforts to Invest in Young Children

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) includes at least \$5 billion for early care and education, which could mean more than \$500 million for California. It includes:

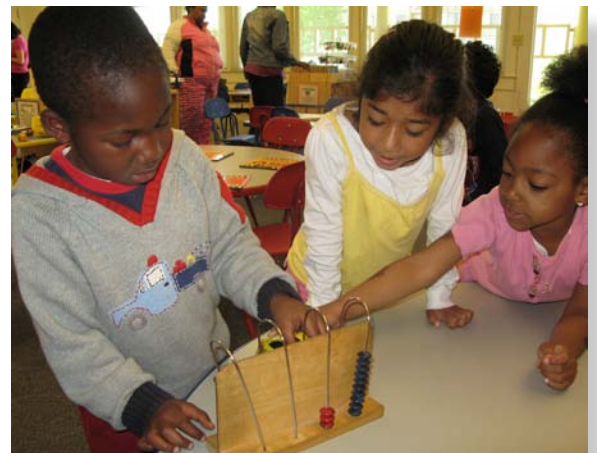
- \$2.1 billion for Head Start, including \$1.1 billion for Early Head Start and \$1 billion for Head Start;
- \$2 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant, the existing federal program that helps states meet child care needs, including funding to support investments in quality,
- \$900 million for early childhood education services for the nation's special needs children;
- \$13 billion for funding public education, including early education, in areas with high concentrations of low-income children; and
- \$53.6 billion to help states pay education costs, some portion of which could be used for early childhood education.

## Looking Ahead: What's In Store for Early Childhood Education

President Obama's fiscal year 2010 budget proposal included over \$1 billion in funding for new and existing programs supporting early education. President Obama proposed investments include \$300 million for a new Early Learning Challenge Fund to help states create, expand or enhance high-quality early care and education programs; \$500 million for new Title I Early Childhood Grants and a \$122 million cost of living increase in Head Start and Early Head Start funding.

On the horizon, other federal policy opportunities may include:

- creating a new Presidential Early Learning Council;
- establishing a Early Learning Challenge Fund;
- reauthorizing No Child Left Behind and the Child Care and Development Block Grant; and
- advocating to ensure the FY2010 budget maximizes new and existing investments in early education.



*“As a Governor and a parent, I realized the early years of a child’s life are the building blocks to success. These bills build on this idea and strengthen parents as teachers.”*

— Senator Kit Bond (R-MO), upon introduction of the Ready to Learn Act and the Education Begins at Home Act, Jan. 15, 2009

California has long led the nation in generating innovative ideas. We must seize this opportunity to become a national leader in early childhood education by securing these new funds and ensuring they are well spent on a high-quality early learning system. In doing so, we can usher in a new era of support for our next generation.

Sources for all research cited in this document are available at [www.preschoolcalifornia.org/federal](http://www.preschoolcalifornia.org/federal)

For more information, visit [www.preschoolcalifornia.org](http://www.preschoolcalifornia.org)



414 13th Street, Suite 500  
Oakland, CA 94612  
(510) 271-0075 T  
(510) 271-0707 F