



Motivating Vision

That all American children from birth to age five, especially those most at-risk, have access to high quality early childhood development that prepares them for success in school and life.

Goal

Act on the overwhelming evidence and public demand for more access to high quality early childhood programs for infants, toddlers and preschoolers by challenging federal, state and local governments to work with philanthropies as well as business and civic leaders to build effective public and private early childhood programs in communities throughout the United States.

Why we must invest in early childhood development

Preparing American children for success in school better prepares them for success in life. The foundation for success begins during pregnancy and is built through age five:

- *Brain development* – Focusing on the earliest years greatly influences the trajectory of intellectual and emotional development throughout childhood and adult life. Ninety percent of physical brain development occurs in the first three years of lifeⁱ, and the quality of adult/child interaction affects brain development and forms the foundational architecture for cognitive and social-emotional skills that shape life outcomes.
- *Achievement* – When a young child develops optimally during the first five years of life and enters kindergarten ready for school, there is an 82% chance that child will master basic skills by age 11 compared with 45% of children who are not school readyⁱⁱ. At-risk children who do not get high quality early childhood experiences are 25% more likely to drop out of school and are 40% more likely to become teen parents. Additionally, at-risk children who do not get high-quality early childhood experiences are 60% more likely not to attend college.ⁱⁱⁱ
- *Health* – The tracking of high quality early childhood program participants into adulthood shows the power of combining early health and nutrition with the development of cognitive and social and emotional skills through interaction and early learning. This comprehensive approach to early childhood development can prevent adult onset chronic diseases such as hypertension, heart disease, diabetes and obesity.^{iv}



Proven economic gains

Investing in a full range of high quality early childhood programs from birth to age five is one of the most economically efficient ways to create upward mobility, a capable and valued workforce and a strong economy through opportunity and enterprise. Nobel Laureate economist James Heckman has shown that investment in high quality early childhood programs for at-risk children from birth to age five delivers a 7-10% return on investment in better education, health, social and economic outcomes through increased productivity and the reduced need for social spending.^v Investing in quality early childhood programs is a cost-efficient strategy for reducing deficits, improving K-12 achievement and promoting economic growth and jobs.

Early childhood in America today

Today, there are proven programs and methodologies to address the needs of very young children, but all are severely under-resourced. Existing prenatal care, home visiting, Early Head Start, Head Start, preschool (mostly 4-year-olds) and public and private childcare must be better equipped to provide high-quality early childhood experiences. Parents, the most important teachers a child will ever have, are also poorly supported.

Many low-income children arrive at kindergarten 18 months behind in vocabulary development and not ready to learn at the same level as their more affluent peers. One reason: a child from a professional family hears roughly 30 million more words by age four than a child from a low-income family.^{vi} Current data shows that almost 6 million low-income children currently aged zero through five will not be ready for kindergarten.^{vii} Consequently, vulnerable children who miss high quality early childhood development milestones in their first three years tragically miss the opportunity to develop the very foundational skills that could help lead them out of poverty.

Repeatedly, research has demonstrated that the quality of the interactions between adults and very young children determine whether children will be ready to learn. Effectively preparing children for school will require improving the quality of care they get from the adults present in each of the settings in which they receive care:

- Voluntary parent education programs, such as home visiting programs, are essential for new parents who need them. Many well-meaning and dedicated parents need basic information and assistance to learn about forming a secure attachment, using positive parenting, and fostering linguistic, cognitive, and social and emotional development in their homes.
- Parents need more time, resources and support to adequately respond to the developmental and educational needs of their children while balancing work and family.



- Family, friends and neighbor caregivers need resources and linkages with community organizations in order to help respond to the children in their care and the families who depend on them.
- Early childhood programs and providers need resources and ongoing support to provide quality care to young children and to support their families.

In these times of tight fiscal budgets at all levels of government, investing in early childhood from birth to age five has proven to save money in reduced special education and remediation programs and improve the future economic prospects of children and the nation.^{viii}

The Opportunity:

To achieve our goals for very young children, we collectively need to invest in providing greater access to high quality early experiences, which would include efforts to:

- Strengthen public systems at federal, state and local levels to ensure continuous quality improvements (parental education, home visits, child care, Head Start, Early Head Start, Pre-K).
- Integrate health and developmental screenings with early learning to provide parents with the information they need to optimize their child's physical, emotional, and intellectual development.
- Improve the training, continuing education, professional development and living wages of early childhood educators.
- Support greater access to evidence-based programs that support parents and families in fostering their children's development.
- Promote and share ongoing program innovation and improvement, especially for those programs supporting parents and informal caregivers.
- Tap varied sources of public funding as well as philanthropic and investment private capital to make sure the demand for quality early childhood resources are met with an ample, affordable supply of quality programs from before birth to age five.



Immediate Summit Impact:

The White House Summit on Early Childhood will immediately increase the national commitment to early childhood investing by:

- Focusing national attention on supporting a full range of birth-to-five programs and resources, not just Pre-K.
- Announcing at least \$340M in new commitments from new and existing funders in the field.
- Announcing \$250M in additional Early Head Start – Childcare partnership grants.
- Announcing \$500M in Pre-K expansion grants to states from the federal government.
- Announcing a Presidential Challenge to corporations, foundations and individuals to dedicate a greater ongoing percentage of their philanthropy to early childhood as a strategy for achieving better education, health, social and economic outcomes.

Long-term post-Summit impact – Ongoing Invest In US Campaign:

Success in these efforts will result in:

Increased funding

- Greater federal investment in state, local and public/private programs.
- More state and local investment in high-quality programs.
- A larger and enduring percentage of philanthropic dollars being devoted to high quality early childhood programs for children from birth to age five.



Increased capacity

- Connecting and empowering “early learning communities” to spread effective models and provide technical support.
- Quality improvements in existing and new federal, state and local public/private early childhood programs.

Access to quality

- Each family and child, regardless of social and economic status, has access to affordable, high quality early childhood development programs in their community.
- All providers have the resources and training to provide high quality services.
- Parents and the public have a simple way to determine the quality of early childhood programs through intuitive, highly visible quality rating systems.

Better outcomes

- Measurably better education, health, social and economic outcomes for children, especially those from low- and moderate-income families.
- Reduced need for social spending on remediation.

ⁱ Issue Brief: Understanding the Effects of Maltreatment on Brain Development, Child Welfare Information Gateway, (2009).

ⁱⁱ Isabel Sawhill, Scott Winship, and Kerry Grannis, *Pathways to the Middle Class: Balancing Personal and Public Responsibilities*, Brookings (2012).

ⁱⁱⁱ Reynolds, A.J. (1995). One Year of Preschool Intervention or Two: Does It Matter? *Early Childhood Quarterly*, 10 (1), 1-31; Schweinhart, L. J., Montie, J., Xiang, Z., Barnett, W. S., Belfield, C. R., & Nores, M. (2005). Lifetime effects: The HighScope Perry Preschool study through age 40. (Monographs of the HighScope Educational Research Foundation, 14). Ypsilanti, MI: HighScope Press; Committee for Economic Development. (2006). *The Economic Promise of Investing in High-Quality Preschool: Using Early Education to Improve Economic Growth and the Fiscal Sustainability of States and the Nation*. Washington, D.C.: Committee for Economic Development.

^{iv} James J. Heckman, Francis Campbell, Gabriella Conte, Seong Hyeok Moon, Rodrigo Printo, Elizabeth Pungello, Yi Pan, *Early Childhood Investments Substantially Boost Adult Health*, Science, 2014.

^v James J. Heckman, *The Case for Investing in Disadvantaged Young Children* (2012).

^{vi} Betty Hart and Todd R. Risley, *The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3* (2003).

^{vii} Analysis of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Survey (2006-7) and American Community Survey (2012); Isaacs & Magnuson (2011), *Income and Education as Predictors of Children's School Readiness*, Brookings; Halle et al (2012), *In the Running for School Outcomes*, ASPE Research Brief.

^{viii} Heckman, James. "Invest in Early Childhood Development: Reduce Deficits, Strengthen the Economy." *The Heckman Equation*. The Heckman Equation Project. Web. 27 Oct. 2014.