

# SMART INVESTMENT, BIG RETURNS: QUALITY EARLY LEARNING IN PENNSYLVANIA

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## THE INVESTMENT

Pennsylvania invests in evidence-based quality early education programs that are proven to produce positive results for young children, families and communities. Approximately one-third (35%) of Pennsylvania's children under age five participate in publicly-funded quality early education programs such as Early Intervention, Head Start, Keystone STARS, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts and home visiting programs.

## THE RESULTS

When at-risk children experience high-quality early learning programs, they have better school, employment, and life outcomes. The results below demonstrate the significant economic gains generated by investing in quality early childhood development.

### RESULTS TODAY:



#### Economic stimulus

For every dollar Pennsylvania invests in early childhood programs, more than two dollars is circulated throughout local economies through employment and purchasing of goods & services.<sup>1</sup>



#### Job creation

For every ten jobs created in the Pennsylvania early care and education sector, three jobs are created outside that sector.<sup>2</sup>



#### School readiness by kindergarten

The percentage of four-year olds with age-appropriate language, math and social skills more than doubled after attending one of Pennsylvania's high quality early education programs in 2012-13.<sup>3</sup>



#### Reduced special education costs

School districts serving the largest number of PA Pre-K Counts graduates in 2008-09 had a lower percentage of children needing special education services in Kindergarten than districts enrolling no PA Pre-K Counts children.<sup>4</sup>

### RESULTS TOMORROW:



#### Meeting standards in elementary school

Children who attended Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts and entered kindergarten in 2010 in the Pottstown School District continue to perform as well as or better than their peers through third grade, with 72% of Pre-K Counts graduates entering fourth grade with proficient literacy skills in 2014, compared to 59% District Average for the full fourth grade class.<sup>5</sup>



#### Reduced crime and delinquency

Children whose mothers participated in Nurse-Family Partnership were 59% less likely to have been arrested by age 15 compared to their peers.<sup>6</sup>



#### Increased high school graduation

Children who attended the high quality Perry Preschool Program were more likely to have graduated high school than their peers who did not attend, and were less likely to repeat grades.<sup>7</sup>



#### Greater adult employment and higher wages

Adults who attended Perry Preschool as children were more likely to be employed and had a 33% higher average income than their peers who did not attend.<sup>8</sup>

# PENNSYLVANIA'S PROGRAMS

**Child Care Works** provides low-income working families with access to child care, making them more likely to retain employment and be more productive at work. Families must provide documentation that they meet work and educational requirements for eligibility. Preference is given to teen mothers so they can remain in school. In 2013-14 more families chose regulated and quality care than ever before, with 87% of children receiving Child Care Works enrolled in regulated child care and 65% enrolled in Keystone STARS programs. Approximately **118,160 children from birth – school age** are expected to receive Child Care Works monthly in 2014-15.

**Early Intervention** serves young children with disabilities/ developmental delays and their families. Early Intervention builds upon the natural learning occurring in a child's early years and promotes collaboration among parents, service providers, early childhood educators and others involved in the child's life. Two-thirds of preschool children who exited Early Intervention in 2013-14 had age-appropriate skills in at least one of three Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) used to compare child progress to national developmental milestones. Approximately **37,800 infants/toddlers and 50,061 preschoolers** are expected to receive early intervention services in 2014-15.

**Head Start** provides comprehensive early learning services to at-risk children and families, prioritizing enrollment to families at 100% of poverty or other categorical eligibility criteria. In addition to educational programming, Head Start offers health/nutrition services, support to families and a strong parent involvement component. The percentage of four-year olds with proficient academic and social skills more than tripled to 76% after participating in Head Start Supplemental Assistance programs in 2012-13. In fact, there was a six-fold increase in the percentage of children with proficient mathematical thinking skills. In 2014-15, **36,652 children** are expected receive Head Start services through state and federal funding.

**Home Visiting Programs** such as Healthy Families America, Nurse-Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers, and Parent-Child Home Program are expected to serve approximately **8,369 children and families** in 2014-15 through state and federal funds. These programs have a family-centered focus that supports families through a strength-based approach that works with both the child and parent.

**Keystone STARS** provides families a tool to gauge the quality early learning programs and is proven to improve the quality of child care based on an independent study. Child care and Head Start programs earn a STAR 1 to STAR 4 level by meeting quality standards for teacher qualifications, learning environment and program management. The percentage of four-year olds with proficient academic and social skills doubled to 81% after participating in Keystone STARS 3 and 4 programs in 2012-13. In 2014-15, approximately **167,000** children from birth through school-age are expected to be served in Keystone STARS.

**Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts** provides high quality pre-kindergarten education for at-risk 3 and 4 year olds in Pennsylvania. The percentage of four-year olds with proficient academic and social skills tripled to 82% after participating in Pre-K Counts programs in 2012-13. In 2014-15 **13,819** children are expected to participate in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts.

**Source:** Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning, all 2015-16 numbers of children served are estimates based on the Governor's budget proposal.

<sup>1</sup> Cornell University, Warner, Mildred. "Child Care Multipliers: Stimulus for the States," 2009.

<sup>2</sup> America's Edge. "Strengthening Pennsylvania's Business through Investments in Early Care and Education," 2011, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> PA Office of Child Development and Early Learning. Based on 2012-2013 child outcomes reporting from Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, Keystone STAR 3 and 4 centers and Head Start Supplemental Assistance Programs

<sup>4</sup> Evaluation by the OMG Center for Collaborative Learning 2008

<sup>5</sup> Based on the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment of early literacy skills. Nearly half (42%) of children in Pottstown SD living in economically at-risk families earning up to 300% of poverty.

<sup>6</sup> "Breaking the cycle of child abuse and reducing crime in Pennsylvania: Coaching parents through intensive home visiting," Fight Crime: Invest in Kids Pennsylvania, 2008

<sup>7</sup> The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study is a study of the effects of a high-quality preschool program for children born in poverty. Lifetime Effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40 (pp. 194–215), by Lawrence J. Schweinhart, Jeanne Montie, Zongping Xiang, W. Steven Barnett, Clive R. Belfield, & Milagros Nores, 2005, Ypsilanti, MI:High/Scope Press.

<sup>8</sup> Perry Preschool Project, <http://www.highscope.org/Content.asp?ContentId=219>