



Investment in High-Quality Early Childhood Programs Supports Businesses

The Achievement Gap Begins Early.

Seventy-five percent of brain growth and 85% of intellect, personality and social skills develop before age 5—in the first 2,000 days of life—so it is imperative that we invest in our youngest children long before they enter school.

What does this mean?

Many children enter Kindergarten already behind- schools need to close this ‘*gap*’ after so much brain development has already occurred and we all pay for this gap in the costs of remedial and special education. Third grade reading scores predict later success; only one-third of New York third graders scored proficient on recent State tests—this means a less prepared workforce in the future.

Targeted investment in access to high-quality early learning will maximize the State’s investment.

Early investment in quality translates into maximizing the State’s return on investment for schools, businesses and families.

- ▶ Children who received *higher-quality* child care had better math skills prior to school entry and during Kindergarten and second grade.ⁱ
- ▶ Toddlers who received *higher-quality* child care had fewer behavior problems than those who received lower-quality care.ⁱⁱ
- ▶ Children who received *lower-quality* child care during the first three years were rated “more difficult” by their preschool teachers and “more hostile” by their Kindergarten teachers.ⁱⁱⁱ

Components of High-Quality Programs.

A high-quality program includes:

- ▶ Well-trained and engaged teachers;
- ▶ Effective curriculum;
- ▶ A safe environment;
- ▶ Small group size and low adult to child ratios; and
- ▶ Excellent parent-teacher communication/family engagement.

Recommendation: Invest in Quality Early to Improve Educational Impacts, Close the Achievement Gap and Support Business and Communities.

The State needs to invest in dramatically expanding access to high-quality early childhood programs. Investment in quality is essential to ensure that New York gets the greatest return on investment: better educated children, youth, and adults who are more likely to succeed in school and life.

ⁱ Lowe Vandell, Deborah and Wolfe, Barbara, *Child Care Quality: Does It Matter and Does It Need to be Improved?*, Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

ⁱⁱ Stein, Rob, “Study finds that effects of low-quality care last into adolescence,” Washington Post (May 14, 2010).

ⁱⁱⁱ Lowe Vandell, Deborah and Wolfe, Barbara, *Child Care Quality: Does It Matter and Does It Need to be Improved?*, Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin-Madison.