



Fact Sheet: The Critical Importance of Early Childhood Development

For Children:

- By Age 5, a child's brain reaches 85% of its adult weight, developing 700 neural synapses every second- the connections that help them learn.¹
- The achievement gap occurs at a very young age. At age 3, high socioeconomic status children have average vocabularies of 1,100 words whereas low socioeconomic status children have average vocabularies of 480 words.²
- Children who participate in early childhood education have increased achievement test scores, decreased rates of being held back in school and decreased placement in special education.³
- Disadvantaged children who participate in early childhood development attain higher high school graduation rates, higher lifetime salary, and higher education levels.⁴

For the Community and Society:

- Quality early education for at-risk children can produce an annual rate of return as high as 16%.⁵
- Every low birth weight costs \$28,000-\$40,000 more just in medical services. Prenatal care and other supports could cut these costs.⁶
- Statistics released by the Pentagon reveal that 75% of young people in America ages 17 to 24 would be unable to enlist in the U. S. military based on these three most common barriers: failure to graduate high school, a criminal record and physical fitness issues, including obesity.¹³
- Interventions later in life (job training, adult literacy, prisoner rehabilitation, and education program for disadvantaged adults) yield low economic returns compared to early interventions, such as pre-K programs.⁷
- Children who participate in early childhood development pay more in taxes, have a reduced need for remediation and welfare, and show less criminal activity.⁴
- The longer society waits to intervene in the life cycle of an at-risk child, the more costly it is to remediate disadvantage.⁸

For Business and the Economy:

- For every \$1 invested in back-up child care, employers can expect a return of \$3 to \$4 in increased productivity and reduced turnover.⁹
- 54% of business leaders said they expect to have difficulty finding enough educated and skilled workers in the future. Concentrating on early childhood education is needed for America to stay competitive in the global economy.¹⁰
- The availability of good early childhood programs is critical to reductions in absenteeism and increased productivity from the parents, as well as the recruitment and retention of parent employees.¹¹
- Over the long term, high-quality early childhood programs have been shown to increase job growth to a greater degree than business subsidies.¹²



Citations:

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- ² Hart, B. and Risley, T.R. (1995). *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H Brookes.
- ³ Schweinhart, L.J., Barnes, H.V. and Weikart, D.P. (1993). *Significant benefits: The High/Scope Perry Preschool study through age 27*. Monographs of the High/Scope Educational Research Foundations, 10. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press.
- ⁴ Lifetime Effects: The High Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40 (2005).
- ⁵ Grunewald, R. and Rolnick, A. (2006). *A Proposal for Achieving High Returns on Early Childhood Development*. Building the Economic Case for Investments in Preschool Conference, Washington, D.C., December 22, 2004.
- ⁶ Fertig, A. and Phaedra, C. (2009). *Delivering Healthy Babies and Economic Returns*. Partnership for America's Economic Success, <http://www.partnershipforsuccess.org>, research.
- ⁷ Heckman, J. (2006). *The Technology and Neuroscience of Skill Formation*. PowerPoint presentation. Invest in Kids Working Group, Center for Economic Development, Partnership for America's Economic Success.
- ⁸ Heckman, J. (2008). The Case for Investing in Disadvantaged Young Children. In First Focus (Ed.) *Big Ideas for Children: Investing in Our Nation's Future* (pp. 49-58). Washington, D.C.: First Focus.
- ⁹ Morrissey, T.W., and Mildred E.W. (2007). *Why Early Care and Education Deserves as Much Attention, or More, than Prekindergarten Alone* (pp. 57-70). Applied Developmental Science.
- ¹⁰ Peck, C. (2005). *American Business Leaders' Views on Publicly-funded Pre-kindergarten and the Advantages in the Economy*. Zogby International, http://www.partnershipforsuccess.org/docs/2006conference/poll_earlyed2006zogby.pdf.
- ¹¹ Galinsky, E. and Johnson, A. (1998). *Reframing the Business Case for Work-Life Initiatives*. New York, NY: Families and Work Institute.
- ¹² Bartik, T.J. (2008). *The Economic Development Effects of Early Childhood Programs*. Washington, D.C.: Partnership for America's Economic Success.

¹³ *Mission: Readiness, Military Leaders for Kids, Ready, Willing and Unable to Serve*, 2009, <http://www.afscmeinfocenter.org/2009/11/ready-willing-and-unable-to-serve-75-percent-of-young-adults-cannot-join-the-military-early-educatio.htm>