

# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

90% of human brain growth happens from birth to age six, but 98% of our state's educational investments happen after kids reach age five.

Increasing our state investments in the crucial ages from birth to age five supports improved educational outcomes throughout a child's life. High quality early childhood education has positive impacts on kindergarten readiness,<sup>1</sup> third grade reading levels,<sup>2</sup> performance on tests throughout elementary school and to the end of high school,<sup>3</sup> high school graduation,<sup>4</sup> and enrollment and persistence in postsecondary education.<sup>5</sup> The benefits also encompass a wide array of positive societal outcomes, including less engagement with the criminal justice system, and increased earnings and family stability as an adult.<sup>6</sup> Home visiting – an early childhood education strategy in which a nurse or other professional coordinates services to families in their home – decreases the likelihood of abuse or neglect<sup>7</sup> while improving family economic self-sufficiency.<sup>8</sup>

Every dollar Washington invests – and has invested in the past – returns significant value to our state. Early childhood education programs in Washington state – like the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) – have a \$4.75 return on investment for every \$1 spent.<sup>9</sup> Evidence-based home visiting can return benefits from \$1.80 to \$5.70 per dollar spent. Our previous state-level spending has ensured that we have two key infrastructure components already in place – a quality rating and coaching structure to ensure kids are in high-quality early care, and a research-proven, state-funded program for the highest need kids to get the supports they need to start school fully kindergarten-ready. Now is the time to see these previous investments through to their full potential, and to do the work to ensure we maximize our K-12 investments.



## LOOKING AHEAD

Early childhood education programming is a vital investment for our children and the future of our state. League of Education Voters believes our state should make sure all kids can benefit from accessing high-quality early childhood education by:

- Increasing our reimbursement rate for Working Connections Child Care and ECEAP to the federally required level in each region.
- Investing more money in home visiting as the foundation of our 0-3 educational investment strategy – to help families when kids have the greatest amount of brain plasticity and growth.
- Meeting our current ECEAP entitlement goal to make sure that the kids who need the most intervention are able to access our research-proven programming.

<sup>1</sup> DeFeyter & Winsler, "The early developmental competencies and school readiness of low-income, immigrant children: Influences of generation, race/ethnicity, and national origins," *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* (2009): 24: 411-31. Barnett & Lamy, "The effects of state pre-kindergarten programs on young children's school readiness in five states," *The National Institute for Early Education Research* (2006). Fantuzzo, Rouse, et al., "Early childhood experiences and kindergarten success: A population-based study of a large urban setting," *School Psychology Review*, 34 (4): 571-88

<sup>2</sup> Karoly, Kilburn & Cannon (2005). Broberg, Wesels, Lamb, & Hwang, "Effects of day care on the development of cognitive abilities in 8-year olds: A longitudinal study," *Developmental Psychology*, 33(1): 62-9.

<sup>3</sup> Gilliam & Zigler, "A critical meta-analysis of all evaluations of state-funded preschool from 1977

to 1998: Implications for policy, service delivery and program evaluation," *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 15(4): 441-73.

<sup>4</sup> Barnett, "Long-term effects of early childhood programs on cognitive and school outcomes," *The Future of Children* 5(3): 25-50.

<sup>5</sup> Karoly, Kilburn, & Cannon, "Early childhood interventions: proven results, future promises," RAND Corporation (2005). Marcon, "Moving up the grades: Relationship between preschool model and later school success," *Early Childhood Research and Practice*, 4 (1): 1-24.

<sup>6</sup> Masse & Barnett, "A benefit cost analysis of the Abecedarian Program," *National Institute for Early Education Research* (2003). McKey et al, "The Impact of Head Start on children, families, and communities: Final report of the Head Start evaluation, synthesis and utilization project," 1985.

<sup>7</sup> DuMont, Kirkland, Mitchell-Herzfeld, et al, "A Randomized Trial of Healthy Families New York (HFNY): Does Home Visiting Prevent Child Maltreatment?"; Olds, Kitzman, Hanks, et al., "Effects of Nurse-Home Visiting on Maternal and Child Functioning: Age Nine Follow-Up of a Randomized Trial" *Pediatrics* 114, 6 (2004): 1560-8.

<sup>8</sup> Olds, Henderson, Tatelbaum, et al., "Improving the Life-Course Development of Socially Disadvantaged Mothers: A Randomized Trial of Nurse Home Visitation," *American Journal of Public Health*, 78, 11 (1988) 1436-45. LeCroy and Krysik, "Randomized Trial of the Healthy Families Arizona Home Visiting Program," *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33, 10 (2011): 1761-6.

<sup>9</sup> Kay & Pennucci, "Outcome Evaluation of Washington State's Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program. (Doc. No. 14-12-2201). Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2017.