High Quality Pre-k: A Critical Investment in the Economic Success and Intellectual Infrastructure of Pennsylvania

The Vision

All children should have the opportunity to enter school ready to succeed. Pre-K for PA is an issue campaign supported by individuals and organizations across Pennsylvania who believe investing in our children is the right choice and an urgent necessity. Pre-K for PA promises to advocate for all Pennsylvania 3- and 4-year-olds who do not have access to high-quality early learning. Your help is needed to send that message to Governor Wolf and the PA Legislature. Let’s make it happen!

The Research

The early years are a crucial time that determines educational and social development.¹

• **BRAIN:** 90% of brain development occurs between birth and age five.²

• **STRENGTHENING SCHOOLS:** Significantly improves early literacy, language and math skills as children enter kindergarten. Results in fewer disruptions or delays for a more conducive learning atmosphere.³

• **ACHIEVEMENT GAP:** There are NO do-overs. Kids who start behind often stay behind.

Economic Impact

Investment in high-quality early learning programs:

• Returns as much as $17 in savings for every $1 invested over the long term.⁴

• Preserves taxpayer dollars by decreasing dropout rates that can increase the likelihood for crime and incarceration during teenage years.⁵

• **Boosts the economy** through increased lifetime earnings and a reduced reliance on social services.¹ The estimated additional lifetime income if Pennsylvania’s dropouts had graduated with their class in 2011 is more than $4 billion.⁶

• Saves taxpayers’ money over time by reducing the need for special education and remedial instruction, and increasing the rates of graduation and college enrollment.⁷

Statewide Return on Investment on Early Childhood Education.⁹

High Quality Pre-K Works!

The percentage of 4-year-olds in 2012-13 with proficient academic and social skills:

more than tripled from 22% to 82% after participating in PA Pre-K Counts

increased more than six-fold from 12% to 76% after participating in Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program, 2012-13

Source: PA Office of Child Development and Early Learning ³

⁴ Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (PPC), A Smart Choice for a Solid Start: The Case for Pre-k in PA, February 2014.
⁶ The median income for a Pennsylvania high school dropout is $20,547, compared to $28,245 for a high school graduate, $33,989 for an Associate’s degree and $48,667 for a Bachelor’s degree.
⁸ Public Citizens for Children and Youth (PCCY), The Bottom Line is Children, Early Care and Education In Montgomery County, February 2014
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THE STATE OF PRE-K IN PENNSYLVANIA: Limited Access

Only 1 in 6 of all 3- and 4-year olds in PA benefit from high quality publicly funded pre-k.

Public funds available for high quality pre-k in PA serve less than 20% of 3- and 4-year-olds.

Need for Investment in Quality and Access

In recent years, about 53,000 Pennsylvania children benefitted from high-quality pre-k funded through state or federal sources. But that represents only about 18 percent of the nearly 300,000 3- and 4-year-olds in the state. It means about 244,000 children lack access to publicly funded, high-quality pre-k every year.

Pennsylvania’s Pre-K Investments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>2012-13 State Budget</th>
<th>2012-13 Federal Budget</th>
<th>2012-13 Children Served</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-K Counts (PKC)*</td>
<td>$82.8M</td>
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<td>21,617</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program (HSSAP)**</td>
<td>$37.3M</td>
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<td>Keystone STARS 3 and 4*</td>
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<td>Federal Head Start†</td>
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<td>Public School Pre-K⁶</td>
<td>$25.5M</td>
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<td>4,180</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$165.4M</td>
<td>$270.5M</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Strong Statewide Public Support

Pre-K for PA has more than 540 supporting organizations - including businesses, educational and local government entities, and diverse community organizations – and nearly 11,000 individual supporters - including elected officials, business leaders, community leaders, educators, and parents - across Pennsylvania.


About Pre-K for PA

Pre-K for PA is an issue campaign supported by individuals and organizations across Pennsylvania who believe that investing in our children is the right choice and an urgent necessity.

Our vision is that every 3- and 4-year-old in Pennsylvania will have access to high-quality pre-k. The campaign’s founding statewide leadership includes:

www.prekforpa.org  facebook.com/prekforpa  twitter.com/prek4pa