

Seven Things Policy Makers Need to Know about School Readiness

Revised and Expanded Toolkit

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About This Toolkit

Seven Things Policy Makers Need to Know about School Readiness was developed by staff at the Child and Family Policy Center in response to requests for basic school readiness information for new legislators. Partner organizations, including the National Conference of State Legislatures and the National Governors Association, contributed to the development of the guide and accompanying materials.

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This toolkit and other SECPTAN publications are supported through generous funding from the Ford Foundation, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the foundations providing support. Editorial and design services: Lariat Solutions, Inc.

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Using the Toolkit

School readiness, or "what children know and can do" at the time they start school, is important to both school and lifelong success. In 1990, President Bush and the nation's governors established seven national education goals, with the first being that: "By the year 2000, all children will start school ready to learn."

Unfortunately, we did not achieve that goal by the turn of the century, but researchers, policy makers, and the public have learned a great deal more about how to achieve it and why we need to achieve it.

One thing we have learned is that there is no single or simple answer to the question of how we can ensure that all children start school ready. At the same time, there is a wealth of information and evidence available to guide policy makers in establishing school readiness programs and policies for very young children and their families. As a society, we know enough to act, but it will require multiple actions to achieve the results we want.

This toolkit organizes the information that policy makers need to know—both to make the case for investments in school readiness, and to develop the programs, practices, and policies to achieve school readiness. It organizes the wealth of evidence under seven key points about school readiness.

First, it provides a summary of each of the seven key points about school readiness that policy makers need to know, along with a list of talking points. These can be duplicated and distributed as handouts.

Second, it provides a briefing paper for each of the seven points, summarizing the evidence that supports each point and providing references for additional information. These also can be duplicated as two-sided, single-sheet handouts.

Third, it provides an annotated, 20-minute PowerPoint presentation on the topic (available for download from the SECPTAN website at www.finebynine.org) and offers recommendations for how to customize the presentation for a state or community by adding state-specific or community-specific information.

Fourth, it provides a brief description of messages regarding school readiness that may be of particular relevance to different groups that can be enlisted to support school readiness strategies.

The materials in this toolkit are presented in modular form, which allows them to be used in different ways with different audiences. They can be used as they are or adapted to meet particular needs. Please use the feedback form at the end of the toolkit to let SECPTAN know how the materials have been used, adapted, and improved upon, so refinements and additions can be shared with others in the field.

Key Messages Summary and Talking Points

INTRODUCTION

What children know and can do at the time they start school ("school readiness") helps determine their educational, and lifelong, success. This is never more true than today. Today's economy demands a highly educated citizenry, meaning that children must be prepared for their own futures more than any generation in the past. With more parents working when their children are very young, there also is an increasing need for early care and education programs.

At the same time, the United States has not yet developed an early childhood system that can meet the 21st century needs of young children and their parents. Building an early childhood system that can help ensure school readiness requires significant public investment. In building that system, policy makers need to understand and address issues related to young children's safety, family support, health, education, and social and emotional development. This requires basic understanding of such disparate fields as brain development and family economics. In short, policy makers need to be familiar with the evidence and research around seven key points:

- 1. Learning Begins at Birth (The Earliest Years Count).
- 2. Nurture (as well as Nature) Matters.
- 3. School Readiness Is More Than What Children Know (It Is Multidimensional).
- 4. School "Unreadiness" Is Expensive.
- 5. Parents Work.
- 6. Quality Matters.
- 7. Investments Pay Off.

KEY MESSAGES SUMMARY

1. Learning Begins at Birth (The Earliest Years Count).

The first five (and particularly the first two) years of life are critical to a child's lifelong development.

During the first years of life, the brain develops most rapidly, establishing neural connections that form the brain's hardwiring. These years are not only important to language and cognitive development, they are also critical to social and emotional development—the ability to form attachments and to deal with challenges and stress. These social and emotional skills are the foundation for educational and life success. In fact, the most critical development in the very early years is the formation of emotional bonds and attachments. Extreme abuse and neglect can have almost irremediable impacts. In general, cognitive skills and content knowledge can be acquired relatively quickly later in life, but only if there is a strong social and emotional base.

2. Nurture (as well as Nature) Matters.

All young children have essential needs that must be met to ensure their early years provide them with a good start in life.

Young children's capacity is not determined entirely by their genetics. The environmental context in which they are nurtured matters—both nature and nurture help determine what children are ultimately able to achieve. Specifically, children need consistent and nurturing families that give them attention and support. They need homes that meet their physical health and nutritional needs. They need constant supervision that allows them to explore the world safely. And they

need guidance and encouragement to learn new skills. Research shows that failure to meet these needs has serious and potentially lifelong consequences for young children.

3. School Readiness Is More Than What Children Know (It Is Multidimensional).

Children's ability to learn goes beyond cognitive development and includes physical, social, and emotional health as well as general approaches to learning.

A child's readiness for school ultimately relates to what that child knows and can do when he or she starts kindergarten, usually at age 5 or 6. This includes preliteracy skills such as phonemic awareness (measured, in part, by knowledge of the alphabet and relationships of sounds to letters). Phonemic awareness is an important building block for reading, but other knowledge and skills are also important, not only for learning to read, but also for being successful in school. Early childhood and educational experts generally agree that there are five important dimensions related to school readiness: physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, language development, approaches to learning, and cognition and general knowledge. These interact, and each affects a child's ability to learn and to succeed in school.

4. School "Unreadiness" Is Expensive.

Failure to start school "ready to learn" has substantial consequences and costs to society as well as to the child.

Studies have suggested that at least half of the eventual "achievement gap" between minority and non-minority children or between poor and non-poor children already exists at the time children enter kindergarten. When children start kindergarten, teachers expect that they

will be able to follow simple directions, stay in their seats, work with others, stay on task, know a range of words and concepts, understand simple stories, and have an interest in learning about new things. When children are not prepared in these ways, they are hard to teach. Without expensive interventions, which most school districts are not equipped to provide, children who aren't ready for kindergarten often fall further behind in their early elementary years. They then may become disciplinary problems, and require special educational services. While schools can and should help students catch up, the larger the initial gap, the harder it is to close that gap. Students who start behind are at a high risk of staying behind and eventually dropping out, getting into trouble with the law, having difficulty finding and keeping a job to support themselves as adults, and having other social and emotional problems—all with major costs to both the child and to society.

5. Parents Work.

Changing economic circumstances have influenced the structure of family life, providing new challenges and opportunities in raising young children.

Over the past 30 years, the percentage of working mothers with pre-school children has more than doubled nationally, from 30 percent to more than 60 percent. The majority of women who work when their children are very young do so because they need the income to maintain their family at a moderate income level (or below). Most families with very young children are starting out in their employment years and earning lower wages. The increased number of parents in the workforce has contributed to the country's overall economic growth by increasing productivity, but it has also made child care a necessity for most parents of young children.

6. Quality Matters.

There is increasing knowledge of what works to support young families in preparing their children to start school ready to succeed.

A convincing body of research has confirmed that high-quality child care produces good results for children, but that poor-quality care can be harmful. The importance of quality early childhood experiences is especially pronounced for lower-income children, who are most likely to start school behind their classmates. While quality care for an infant is different than quality care for a 3- or 4-year-old, extensive research shows that, in both cases, quality matters. At the same time, quality care is currently not affordable for many working families. Studies have shown that only a small percentage of child care in the country is of high quality, and a significant proportion is of quality poor enough to actually harm children.

7. Investments Pay Off.

Investments in the early years make sense, both in terms of a child's development and in terms of future public costs and benefits.

Research has identified programs and practices that have been proven effective in preparing children to start school and others that measurably strengthen a family's ability to nurture and raise children. Several longitudinal studies of early childhood programs have shown that they not only improve children's educational achievement, but also reduce the need for special education services and juvenile justice services. The long-term effects of these programs include improved adult career achievement and reduced involvement in the welfare and criminal justice systems (the latter of which is the fastest-growing part of many state budgets).

When framed in economic terms, these results show that early childhood programs can have high overall returns from their initial investments—through reduced crime and criminal justice costs; improved education, earnings, and tax paying; and reduced adolescent parenting and welfare involvement. But only high-quality programs that work with both children and families who are identified as being at risk of educational or other problems demonstrate these results.

Despite this evidence, there is currently very little investment in early childhood or family support programs or in the earliest years of life in general. While the potential gains are greatest during the early years, the actual per-child investments in this country's youngest children (ages 0-5) are tiny when compared with investments in school-aged children (ages 6-17) or college-aged young adults (ages 18-23). After reviewing the early childhood literature and comparing early childhood funding with other types of investment in human capital, Nobel laureate economist James Heckman advised: "Invest in the very young."

TALKING POINTS

1. Learning Begins at Birth (The Earliest Years Count).

- Most of the brain's growth occurs in the first few years of life.
- The foundations for language and learning are established early.
- Attachment and bonding in the first several years affect a child's ability to adjust and relate to the world for his or her whole life.

2. Nurture (as well as Nature) Matters.

- Children learn from birth and need constant supervision and stimulation as they explore the world.
- A stable, nurturing home environment supports all aspects of a child's growth.

3. School Readiness Is More Than What Children Know (It Is Multidimensional).

- Language, pre-literacy, and numeric skills are important to school success but represent only one dimension of school readiness.
- Physical, social, and emotional development (paying attention, following instructions and rules, getting along well with others) are also fundamental to learning in school.

4. School "Unreadiness" Is Expensive.

• Up to half of school problems and eventual school dropouts start with children entering school developmentally behind.

 The costs to society of children not being ready to start school include health-related costs, extra educational costs to try to catch up (special education), juvenile delinquency, and adult corrections costs.

5. Parents Work.

- Over the past 30 years, changing economic times and public policies have doubled the percentage of mothers in the workforce when children are very young.
- Families where both parents—or the only parent—work(s) now represent the majority of families with young children.
- These changes have increased the country's workforce by more than five million workers, with commensurate increases in needs for early care and education services.

6. Quality Matters.

- Quality services to support parents and parenting can improve school readiness, particularly for low-income children.
- Child care quality matters for all children: good care improves development, while poor care can cause damage.

7. Investments Pay Off.

- Research of high-quality programs for low-income families shows significant positive returns on investment in reduced costs for special education and juvenile and adult services.
- Still, current investments in the early years of life (0-5) remain small in comparison with investments later in life.

BRIEFING PAPERS

Each of the following briefing papers covers one of the seven points and provides references for more information. Each briefing paper may be reproduced as a two-sided, single-sheet handout.

SCHOOL READINESS BRIEFING PAPER 1

Learning Begins at Birth (The Earliest Years Count)

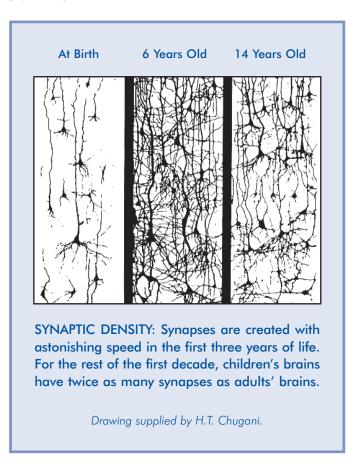
The first years of life are crucial to a child's lifelong growth and development. Brain research has proven that most of the brain's actual physical growth occurs during the first two years of life, when vital neural connections are made in response to the child's environment. At birth, there are roughly 100 billion neurons already developed in a child's brain; few will be produced for the rest of the child's life. A newborn's neurons have "tentative connections," which, through the child's experiences, will become the hardwired connections responsible for all of a child's major cognitive and emotional functioning, including vision, language, emotions, and movements.

Stimulation and interactions are essential to the development of these connections and the brain's hardwiring. These are produced at their highest rate in the first few years of life. By age 3, roughly 85 percent of the brain's core structure will be formed.

The three pictures of neurons and synaptic links among them are shown for three ages—at birth, age 6, and age 14. As the pictures show, synapses are created at astonishing speed in the first six years of life. For the rest of the first decade of a child's life, a child's brain has twice as many synapses as an adult's brain, attesting to the rapid learning and hardwiring during the early years.

Brain research has shown that nurturing in the earliest years is crucial for emotional and social, as well as intellectual, development. In particular, children develop their sense of trust and attachment very early in life, as well as begin to develop their cognitive and pre-literacy skills. The hardwiring that forms affects basic response patterns to stress and ways of relating

to others. Severe abuse or neglect during the earliest years of life can produce nearly irremediable damage, including a predilection to violence and specific psychological disorders.



While there is a great deal of plasticity in brain development (people continue to learn and change throughout life), there is no doubt that the earliest years are those of greatest growth and those most susceptible to influence by external factors. The first years of life do not dictate what a child will become, but they do lay the foundation for his or her educational—and life—success.

SCHOOL READINESS BRIEFING PAPER 1 (continued)

The following chart provides a very basic overview of the changes in thinking that have occurred as a result of brain research.

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RETHINKING THE BRAIN				
Old Thinking	New Thinking			
How a brain develops depends on the genes you are born with.	How a brain develops hinges on a complex interplay between the genes you are born with and the experiences you have.			
The experiences you have before age 3 have a limited impact on later development.	Early experiences have a decisive impact on the architecture of the brain, and on the nature and extent of adult capacities.			
A secure relationship with a primary caregiver creates a favorable context for early development and learning.	Early interactions don't just create a context; they directly affect the brain's development.			
Brain development is linear; the brain's capacity to learn and change grows steadily as an infant progresses toward adulthood.	Brain development is nonlinear; there are prime times for acquiring different kinds of knowledge and skills.			
A toddler's brain is much less active than the brain of a college student.	By the time children reach age 3, their brains are twice as active as those of adults.			
	Source: Rethinking the Brain			



SCHOOL READINESS BRIEFING PAPER 2

2. Nurture (as well as Nature) Matters

Nurture—not just nature—matters. Young children do not grow up in a vacuum, nor are their abilities set genetically. Both nature and nurture are involved in what children are able to attain. Children's environments need to be stimulating, as well as safe and stable, for their minds to grow and develop. In particular, children need stable, nurturing families that provide attention, support, and a safe home environment—parents are their children's first and most important teacher.

Brain and child development research, entirely consistent with common sense, has defined several fundamental and universal needs of young children for healthy growth and development:

- Competent and confident parenting that is constant and consistent throughout the early years of life (at least one, and preferably two, parent figures who provide nurturing, protection, and stimulation and with whom the child bonds and forms attachments)
- Health and nutrition (adequate food and exercise for physical and mental growth, protection against and response to disease and injury, and early identification and treatment of special health care needs)
- Guidance and instruction (help and practice in developing large and small motor skills, pre-literacy cognitive skills, and the ability to relate with adults and other children)
- Constant, stable, appropriate supervision (continuous adult oversight and support that enables the child to safely explore the environment)

Failure to meet any of these needs puts a child at developmental risk. The severity, duration, and number of unmet needs all impact the risk to the child.

Fortunately, most children are born healthy and into families that can provide them with all of the nurturing and support they need. At the same time, some parents struggle to provide that environment, and almost 3 in 10 babies manifest some risk factors at birth, with nearly 1 in 10 possessing several risk factors (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Single parenting, adolescent parenting, and parenting by parents with low education levels all are known to present risk to a child's growth and development. Babies born at low birth weight or without adequate prenatal care are also vulnerable to health concerns.

Virtually all parents love their children and want to provide a nurturing environment for them; most are receptive to preventive and developmental services. There is a growing body of research and evidence that policies, practices, and programs, including those listed below, can be developed to meet children's universal needs for:

- Confident and competent parenting—general child development information (through the media, at the hospital and doctor's office, and at other places parents go to receive information); parenting education, home visiting, and family support programs and resource centers providing help to parents in nurturing their children; and income supports to ensure stability in family home life (including housing subsidies, the earned income tax credit, and other supports to meet basic needs)
- Health and nutrition—health insurance coverage, prenatal care, primary and preventive (well child) health services, and a medical home; nutrition programs; and early identification and treatment of developmental and other special health care needs

SCHOOL READINESS BRIEFING PAPER 2 (continued)

- Guidance and instruction—pre-school programs that are developmentally appropriate and enable pre-school children (3-5) to interact and learn through more formal guidance and instruction, including enriched and more comprehensive programs and services through Head Start or other programs targeted to children with additional needs
- Constant, stable, appropriate supervision—
 affordable and accessible child care that provides
 developmentally appropriate care and supervision,
 available for families who need child care for
 children from birth through age 5; child care
 standards, training, technical assistance, and
 support to reduce turnover and help ensure the
 quality of care in formal settings; information and
 supports for informal caregivers (family, friend, and
 neighbor care) that enable them to provide safe and
 developmentally appropriate environments; and
 family leave policies that enable parents to stay at
 home when their children are very young

Research also has shown that the effectiveness of programmatic efforts to achieve gains in school readiness on a statewide or community-wide basis by meeting these universal needs is dependent on three important factors:

- The ability to identify and serve those children (and their families) at risk of otherwise not having these basic needs met
- The effectiveness in meeting those needs
- The extent to which they serve all children with these needs

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SCHOOL READINESS BRIEFING PAPER 3

3. School Readiness Is More Than What Children Know (It Is Multidimensional)

School readiness is multidimensional—it's not just what children know. Being ready to learn includes expressing curiosity, playing and working well with others, following directions, and handling feelings effectively, as well as having language and numeracy skills.

Currently, there is a great deal of attention being paid to language and literacy development in young children. The No Child Left Behind Act enacted by Congress in 2002 has strong accountability standards, with students reading at grade level by third grade a key measure. The standards are based on research indicating that third grade reading comprehension test scores can predict much of a child's success in school. At the same time, however, research also shows that a child's health affects how well he or she learns and that social and emotional development is key to learning.

Based on solid child development and early education research, the National Education Goals Panel developed a broad definition of a child's readiness for school that includes five dimensions:

- Physical well-being and motor development: general health and growth; gross and fine motor skills; and the absence of unattended physical conditions or exposure to toxic substances
- Social and emotional development: ability to interact socially, take turns, and cooperate; positive sense of self worth and ability; and the ability to interpret and express feelings

- Language development: verbal language, including listening, speaking, and vocabulary; emerging literacy, including print awareness (assigning sounds to letter combinations), story sense (recognizing story elements), and writing process (representing ideas through drawing, letter-like shapes, or letters)
- Approaches to learning: enthusiasm, curiosity, and persistence in completing tasks
- Cognition and general knowledge: understanding
 of shapes and spatial relationships; knowledge of
 social conventions such as holidays; and knowledge
 derived from looking across objects, events, or
 people for similarities, differences, and associations

Each of these dimensions represents something that can be measured and used for diagnosis and early intervention, for instructional guidance and support, and for tracking trends in school readiness for the population as a whole (it is not recommended that assessments of young children be used to determine whether they should start school). These five dimensions all affect the future success of children, and the development of each should be supported in both the pre-school years and when a child starts school.

In addition to a child's readiness for school, the National Education Goals Panel also has emphasized two other components of school readiness—a school's readiness for children, and family and community supports and services that contribute to children's readiness. Schools can and should take actions to improve children's learning, at whatever developmental level they are when starting school. Schools can do much to address any gaps children face at the start of school—including supporting parents as the most important figures in children's lives and their first and most important teachers.

Still, it is essential to recognize that what children know and can do at the time of school entry across the five

SCHOOL READINESS BRIEFING PAPER 3 (continued)

dimensions of school readiness does impact their future learning and success. Improving the school readiness of children is one of the most effective ways to improve their overall success.

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SCHOOL READINESS BRIEFING PAPER 4

4. School "Unreadiness" Is Expensive

School "unreadiness" is costly—not only to the children who start behind but to society as a whole. When children's essential needs are not met in the early years and they do not start school well-prepared, they are prone to a wide array of future problems and needs that relate both to school success and to success in life in general.

In fact, an extensive research base has established cause-and-effect relationships between failures to meet young children's essential needs (competent and confident parenting; health and nutrition; guidance and instruction; and constant, stable, appropriate supervision) and future problems and costs to society. In particular, when children's early needs aren't met, society incurs an accumulating heavy price through:

- Health care costs to address chronic conditions throughout life
- Special education and grade retention costs in the early elementary years
- Juvenile delinquency and remediation costs in the middle and high school years
- School failure, reduced earnings and taxpaying, and increased dependency costs in the early adult years
- Crime and criminal justice system costs in adult years

As shown in the chart below, the child and society pay the cost of poor early childhood outcomes arising from child abuse and neglect, preventable health care problems, absence of developmentally appropriate guidance, and poor-quality supervision. Child abuse, for instance, increases the cost of health care (for treating depression and other mental health issues),

children's special and remedial education, and other human services related to delinquency and child welfare. It also leads to reduced earnings and increased welfare dependence. Other costs are generated by lack of preventive health care services, absence of developmentally appropriate guidance, and poor-quality supervision. In the case of each of these problems, the costs can be substantial and lifelong.

Some of the areas of most rapid growth in state budgets—corrections and prison costs, special education expenditures, and Medicaid expenditures (particularly behavioral health services for children)—are connected to failures in meeting children's needs in the earliest years.

While most children start school "ready to learn" on most dimensions of school readiness, research has shown that a significant proportion start school sufficiently behind to be at risk of one or more of these poor outcomes and societal costs. Poverty, parental education and stability, parental depression, and other conditions represent risk factors related to school readiness and future success. Research suggests that the "achievement gap" faced by poor and minority students is evident at the time of school entry. Research also has shown that as many as one-third of children start school behind on more than one dimension of school readiness, and that as many as 1 in 10 is very substantially behind and likely to incur the future social costs described above.

School "unreadiness" is expensive to society, and strategies that improve school readiness can help to avoid those future costs.

SCHOOL READINESS BRIEFING PAPER 4 (continued)

Established Research Links Between Failure to Meet Child Needs and Public Costs

	Parental Abuse/ Neglect	Preventable Health Problems	Inadequate Guidance	Poor- Quality Supervision
Child Health Costs	✓	1	✓	✓
Child Education Costs	1	✓	1	1
Child Human Service Costs	✓	1	✓	1
Costs in Adulthood	√	✓	✓	1

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SCHOOL READINESS BRIEFING PAPER 5

5. Parents Work

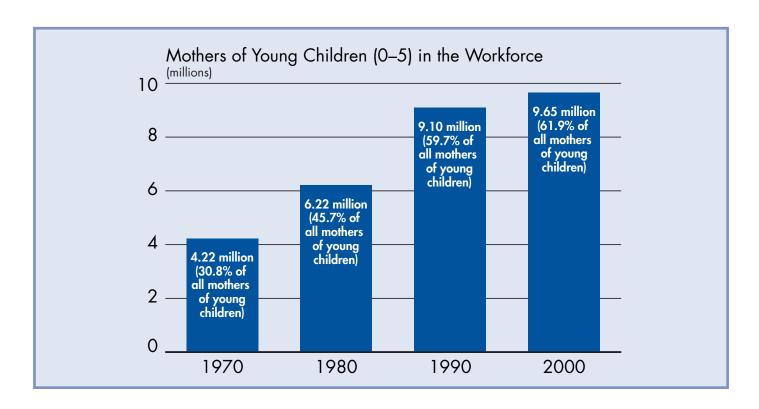
The simple fact is that most parents now work outside the home, even when their children are very young. For many parents, work now commands more of their daily time than their own children. Providing food and shelter often comes at the expense of time with family. Parents need support raising their children.

Economics have changed the structure of family life, particularly for families with young children. Over the past 30 years, the percentage of mothers of very young children who are in the workforce has doubled, from 30.8 percent in 1970 to 61.9 percent in 2000. Women's entry into the workforce over this period has contributed dramatically to the growth in the American economy, accounting for nearly one-quarter (23.6 percent) of overall growth in American employment (almost all of the rest

is the result of total population growth). As the table below shows, most of this growth occurred in the period from 1970 to 1990, but public policies have yet to catch up with this new reality.

Much of the increase in working mothers is the result of a decline over this period in real (inflation-adjusted) wages for men: families need the additional income. While public opinion polls show that the majority of parents would prefer to stay at home with their children, at least when they are very young (0-2), parents feel they must work to provide the basic necessities of food and shelter for their families.

Parents with young children struggle to meet their children's needs far more than parents with older children. Nationally, 36 percent of families with at least one young child (under age six) earn less than 185 percent of the federal poverty level (\$28,980 for a family



SCHOOL READINESS BRIEFING PAPER 5 (continued)

of three in 2004), versus 26 percent of families with only older children. Recent efforts to establish self-sufficiency standards (the amount of resources families need to provide the basics) for families with young children have placed these standards at least at 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

The economic struggle of families with young children has a direct impact on the school readiness of these children. Since 1970, more than five million mothers of young children have joined the workforce, contributing to their family's financial security and to the country's overall economic growth—yet making it more difficult for them to meet their children's needs for guidance, nurturing, supervision, and educational instruction.

These economic changes to family life create new challenges and demands for young children and their development. At a minimum, there is a much greater need for child care arrangements that are both affordable and available. Further, since children spend more time away from home and their parents, it is increasingly important that child care arrangements address their developmental needs.

Sources for More Information

Mishel, L., Bernstein, J., & Allegretto, S. (2005). *The state of working America 2004-2005*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Wider Opportunities for Women's "Family Economic Self-Sufficiency State Organizing Project" provides information about self-sufficiency standards in several states. Information can be retrieved from their website: http://www.sixstrategies.org.



SCHOOL READINESS BRIEFING PAPER 6

6. Quality Matters

Quality matters. High-quality early learning experiences help children start school ready to succeed, while poorquality services can actually do harm. This applies to programs providing home visiting and parenting education, family support and strengthening services, health and nutrition services, child care, and pre-school. Moreover, programs are most effective when they are not stand-alone efforts but rather connect the young children and families they serve to other needed supports. High-quality child care helps prevent child abuse and aids in early detection of special health care needs by going beyond providing developmental services to the children in care. Particularly when serving vulnerable children and families, quality includes the ability to effectively identify unmet needs and connect children and families to the services needed to meet those needs. There is no magic bullet—no single program or intervention—that can ensure school readiness, but quality programs addressing young children's needs in a holistic fashion can make major differences. Children from low-income families, who are the most likely to start school behind their classmates, especially benefit from high-quality child care. Regardless of the ethnic or income group served, quality care requires meeting the diverse needs of infants, toddlers, and pre-kindergarten children.

Research has shown that effective early childhood care and education services have the following nine components (Groark, et al., 2002):

- Well-educated staff, trained and knowledgeable about child development
- Caring staff, able to connect with children and families and build on strengths and who are culturally competent in their work

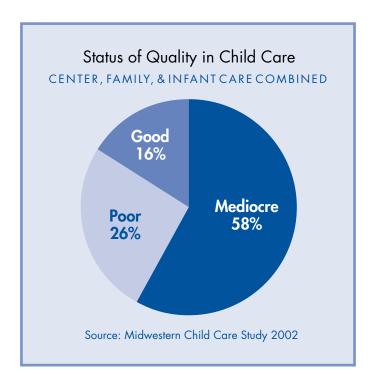
- Consistent staff, able to build relationships and maintain continuity with children and their families, characterized by very low staff turnover
- Supportive and regular supervision of staff, providing continuous training and development
- Clear and reachable goals and objectives regarding growth and development, flexibly applied to address individual strengths and differences
- Adequate staffing to provide the duration and intensity of involvement required to affect development
- A child and family focus, stressing family involvement both within and beyond the specific program
- Comprehensive approaches, ensuring that children's essential needs are met, either directly or through referral
- Systematic monitoring and evaluation, benchmarking progress to improve practice

Programs that do not incorporate these practices—whether because of limited funding, efforts to serve a broad population, or other reasons—have not shown significant or lasting impacts for the children and families they serve.

While high-quality child care can make a crucial difference in children's school readiness, studies of child care quality have consistently shown that much care is of only mediocre quality, and that some care is actually unsafe. This applies both to center-based care and to family day care.

SCHOOL READINESS BRIEFING PAPER 6 (continued)

The following chart shows the results of a study in the Midwest of licensed child care centers and registered family day care homes, including centers and homes providing infant care. Less than one-fifth of the care was observed to be of good quality, and over one-fourth was found to be poor. Attention to quality is essential as policy makers work to establish early learning programs and services.



Sources for More Information

Groark, C.J., Mehaffie, K.E., McCall, R.B., Greenberg, M.T., & the Universities Children's Policy Collaborative. (2002). From science to policy: Research on issues, programs and policies in early care and education. Prepared for the Governor's Task Force on Early Childhood Care and Education. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development.

Carnegie Task Force on Meeting the Needs of Young Children. (1997). *Starting points: Meeting the needs of our youngest children*. New York, NY: Carnegie Corporation of New York and National Center for Children in Poverty.

Center for the Study of Social Policy. (2004). *Protecting children by strengthening families: A guidebook for early childhood programs.* Washington, DC.

Kagan, S.L., and Cohen, N. (1997). *Not by chance: Creating an early care and education system for America's children.* New Haven, CT: Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy.



SCHOOL READINESS BRIEFING PAPER 7

7. Investments Pay Off

Investments in young children pay off—to the children and their families, to society, and to government.

There is much research that shows that high-quality programs can have lasting positive impacts on child development, and a few of these programs have also tracked the gains to society and to government.

Four well-researched early childhood programs have determined their cost-benefits, or return on investment (the amount gained compared with the program's cost). For every dollar spent on these programs, returns on investment can be demonstrated for the taxpayer, society, and the participant, as shown in the chart below.

While all of these programs were of high quality and served low-income or otherwise disadvantaged populations, they also represent diverse approaches to addressing childhood needs. The Perry Preschool program was an enriched pre-school program for 3- and 4-year-olds that incorporated strong parental involvement and long-term tracking and contact with families. The Abecedarian Project provided parent-child care and instruction to new mothers, as well as comprehensive child development services throughout their child's early years. The Parent/Early Infancy Project was a structured home visiting program that addressed mothers', as well as children's, needs. The Chicago Child-Parent Centers provided pre-school programs with strong parental involvement and extended their work into the early elementary grades. All sought to identify health and special developmental needs among the children they served.

While these programs make a strong case for investing in early childhood programs, current investments in very young children and their development lag far behind those made for school-aged children and college-aged youth. The 12-state report *Early Learning Left Out* found that for every dollar invested in the education and development of school-aged children and for every 70 cents invested in college-aged youth, less than 14 cents is invested in the early learning, preschool years.

The return-on-investment literature, however, is drawing new allies to early childhood. Increasingly, business leaders and economists are advocating for additional public investment in the early years because of the high economic returns to society:

- The Committee for Economic Development (CED), composed of corporate and educational leaders from around the country, has pressed for investments in school readiness, particularly for disadvantaged youth.
- Jim Ranier, former CEO of Honeywell, has spearheaded, with Bank of America, the expansion of United Way of America's Success by Six program around the country.
- Bank of Minneapolis President and CEO Gary H. Stern recommended establishing a \$1.5 billion endowment for early childhood services in Minnesota, based on well-established economic research and analysis. He concluded that, among all opportunities to invest in economic development, investing in early childhood would have the greatest overall returns.
- James Heckman, a Nobel laureate economist, reviewed the early childhood literature and examined the relative merits of various public investments. His resulting synthesis of research and modeling led him to conclude that investments in early childhood offered the best rates of return. Heckman's advice: "Invest in the very young."

SCHOOL READINESS BRIEFING PAPER 7 (continued)

Ranier, Stern, and Heckman have been convinced by evidence presented to them that investing in the early years makes good business sense.

The evidence is clear: Investments in the early years to meet children's universal needs can reap large dividends for individuals, families, and society.

Sources for More Information

Bruner, C. (2004). Many happy returns: Three economic models that make the case for school readiness. Des Moines, IA: State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network.

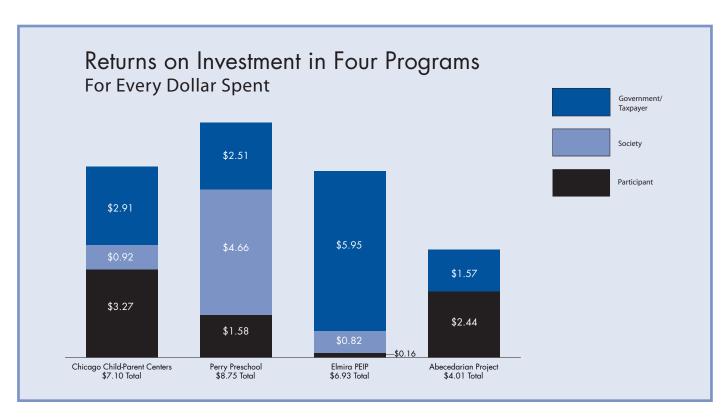
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Karoly, L.A., Greenwood, P.W., Everingham, S.S., Houbé, J.K., Kilburn, M.R., Rydell, C.P., et al. (1998). *Investing in our children: What we know and don't know about the costs and benefits of early childhood interventions.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

Lynch, R. (2004). Exceptional returns: Economic, fiscal, and social benefits of investment in early childhood development. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute.





PRESENTATION

The PowerPoint presentation is designed for use with multiple audiences, and may be adapted to suit multiple purposes. The annotated presentation provides a narrative to go along with the slides and covers all seven school readiness points. Suggestions are also provided as to how the presentation can be customized and can draw upon available state or community information. The PowerPoint presentation can be downloaded in electronic form from the SECPTAN website: www.finebynine.org

Annotated PowerPoint Presentation

SLIDE 1



Speaker Comments

We all know that young children are very important people. Parents have the greatest influence over and responsibility for their children's lives and should be their child's first teacher. Society and government, however, also have a role in ensuring that children are safe and secure and grow up ready to succeed.

The First National Education Goal established in 1990, that "all children start school ready to learn," recognizes parents' primary role but also recognizes the need for community support to ensure young children's growth and development.

In working to meet the First National Education Goal, it is important for legislators, other policy makers, and the public to know what makes achieving this goal so important.

The following presentation provides seven points about school readiness that are based on research, evidence, and common sense about young children and the importance of their learning.

SLIDE 2

1. Learning Begins at Birth

- · Brain growth most rapid
- Child makes connection to world the foundation for all later learning

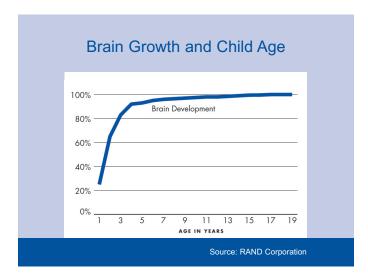
Speaker Comments

The first two years of a child's life are extremely crucial to his or her lifelong growth and development. In fact, the first two years of life are when most of the actual growth of the brain occurs and when vital connections are made within the brain that will affect future growth.

Brain research further has established that the first few years are especially critical to a child's social and emotional development and how the child will relate to others and handle stress. Basic response patterns to new environments are established during this time.

In addition, the first few years of life are times of astonishing growth in neural networks that form the foundation for language development. The brain is something of a blank slate and is being "wired" through the establishment of neural pathways.

SLIDE 3



Speaker Comments

In short, while the first years of life do not dictate what a child will become, they do set the foundation and have a very strong influence on all later learning. This curve is a representation of the brain's actual growth and initial wiring, from birth to age 18. As the graph shows, by age 3 roughly 85 percent of the brain's core structure will be formed.

SLIDE 4

2. Nurture (as well as Nature) Matters

- · Competent and confident parenting
- · Basic health and nutrition
- Age-appropriate guidance and instruction
- Constant, stable, appropriate supervision

Speaker Comments

During these earliest years, children respond to the stimuli around them. While children are born as unique beings, they are strongly affected by their environment, with a caring and consistent parent who responds to and nurtures them being the most important element.

In fact, research and common sense confirm that children have essential and universal needs to grow up safe and healthy. Although these may be provided differently in different cultures, all children need, as the chart shows:

- Competent and confident parenting that is constant and consistent throughout the early years of life (at least one, and preferably two, parent figures who provide nurturing, protection, and stimulation and with whom the child bonds)
- Health and nutrition (adequate food and exercise for physical and mental growth, protection against and response to disease and injury, and early identification and treatment of any special health conditions)

- Guidance and instruction (help and practice in developing large and small motor skills, pre-literacy, cognitive skills, and the ability to relate with adults and other children)
- Constant, stable, appropriate supervision (continuous adult oversight and support that enables the child to safely explore the environment)

Every child needs these things. Most of them are provided by parents most of the time, but society also plays a role in ensuring that these needs are met for every child.

SLIDE 5

Young Children's Needs and Public Programs That Address Them

Need	Public Programs
Confident and competent parenting	Parenting education, home visiting, family support
Health and nutrition	Health insurance coverage, primary and preventive health care, nutrition services, and special education services
Age-appropriate guidance & instruction	Pre-school, including enriched pre-school for low-income/disadvantaged children
Constant, appropriate supervision	Quality early care and education (child care), family and medical leave

Speaker Comments

This slide shows program and policy areas that correspond to ensuring that young children's needs are fully met.

Communities and states have developed effective parenting education, home visiting, and family support programs to assist stressed or unprepared parents in becoming confident and competent. Working with

parents of newborns has been identified as one of the greatest opportunities for developing effective prevention programs.

Health insurance coverage, primary and preventive health services, and early detection programs and follow-up services to address developmental delays and disabilities represent ways society can ensure that children's health and nutrition needs are met.

Pre-school programs for 3- and 4-year-olds, including general pre-kindergarten programs available on a voluntary basis to all and enriched pre-school for low-income or disadvantaged children, can ensure that children have rich experiences that enable them to grow—experiences that are age-appropriate and ensure they start kindergarten ready and eager to learn.

Quality child care arrangements, subsidies so working families can afford quality care, and family and medical leave opportunities help ensure that young children have constant, appropriate supervision.

Again, while parents remain their child's first and most important teacher, there are roles and responsibilities that society must assume to ensure that all children have the support they need to grow and develop.

SLIDE 6



Speaker Comments

Much goes into a child's growth and development during these first years of life. Children grow at different rates and in different areas at different times. The first years of life are particularly dynamic.

Research has shown, however, that there are a number of interrelated dimensions of growth and learning in these early years, all of which must be attended to.

The National Education Goals Panel has identified five separate dimensions of school readiness that relate to:

- Physical well-being and motor development
- Social and emotional development
- Language development (verbal language and emerging literacy)
- Approaches to learning (enthusiasm, curiosity, and persistence in completing tasks)

 Cognition and general knowledge (including understanding of spatial relationships and number concepts)

All of these dimensions are important to school success. Each affects later academic success, whether it be in reading, mathematics, or science.

This scientific evidence relates back to common sense. A child's health and social and emotional adjustment, as well as language development and knowledge, are key to learning and growing.

SLIDE 7

4. School "Unreadiness" Is Expensive

- · Lifelong health care for chronic conditions
- · Special education and grade retention
- Juvenile delinquency and remediation
- Less taxpaying and higher dependency due to failure in school
- · Crime and criminal justice system

Speaker Comments

Most children start school proficient or developing proficiency across all five of these dimensions. Unfortunately, too many do not. When children's basic needs are not met, there are costs—clearly, to the young child, but to society as well.

Research has shown that these costs can be major and include those listed in the slide:

- Health costs to address chronic conditions throughout life
- Special education and grade retention costs in early elementary years
- Juvenile delinquency and remediation costs in the middle and high school years
- School failure, reduced earnings and taxpaying, crime and incarceration costs, and increased welfare costs in the adult years

SLIDE 8

Established Research Links Between Failure to Meet Child Needs and Public Costs

	Parental Abuse/ Neglect	Preventable Health Problems	Inadequate Guidance	Poor- Quality Supervision
Child Health Costs	1	✓	1	✓
Child Education Costs	1	1	1	1
Child Human Service Costs	1	1	1	1
Costs in Adulthood	1	1	1	1

Speaker Comments

In fact, a wealth of research has traced many of these costs back to failures to meet child needs in the earliest years. As this slide shows (and again, common sense suggests), failures to meet young children's needs in the early years—as evidenced by parental abuse and neglect, untreated preventable or correctable health problems, poor supervision, and lack of guidance and stimulation—have been linked to future problems and costs in multiple areas, including health care,

education and special education, human services, and adult dependency and corrections costs.

SLIDE 9

5. Parents Work

Dramatic changes in the workforce over the past 30 years have contributed to economic growth nationally. Now, the majority of mothers with young children work simply to earn enough to get by.

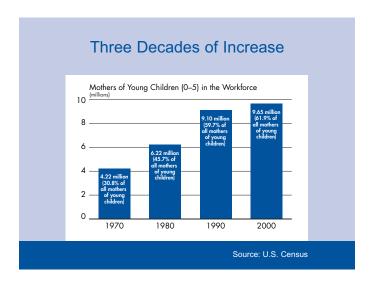
Speaker Comments

One of the reasons for increased interest in the earliest years of life has been new findings from brain research and child development research. In addition, however, the simple fact is that the raising of young children has changed dramatically over the past several decades.

Since 1970, economics have changed the structure of family life, particularly for families with young children. The percentage of mothers with young children (0-5) who are in the workforce has doubled, largely because it increasingly has required two incomes to economically support a family with young children.

This has dramatically increased the demand for child care and the need for supervision of children by someone outside the home.

SLIDE 10



Speaker Comments

This slide shows the actual growth in the numbers of mothers with young children who are in the workforce—from 1970 to 2000. Over five million more mothers of young children are working outside the home than were working outside the home 30 years ago, which has contributed both to the family's finances and to the country's overall economic growth.

Even with this growth, however, many of these families with young children have very moderate incomes. In 2000, 36 percent of all families with a child under age 5 earned less than 185 percent of the federal poverty level, which for a three-person family is \$28,980. Most Americans believe that this is about the minimum amount families need to get by economically—for this population, it simply is not an option to stay at home rather than work.

SLIDE 11

6. Quality Matters

Research shows quality is critical to significant benefits in:

- · Health and nutrition services
- Home visiting, parenting education, and family support programs
- · Child care and pre-school

Speaker Comments

One of the biggest contributions that research has made in understanding what society and government can do to support families with young children is its examination of early care and education programs.

The results have been clear—across health and nutrition services; home visiting, parenting education, and family support programs; and child care and pre-school programs. In all of these areas, research has shown that quality matters.

Health and nutrition programs are most effective when they include primary and preventive well-child visits that are comprehensive, assessing children's development and providing parents guidance on child development concerns.

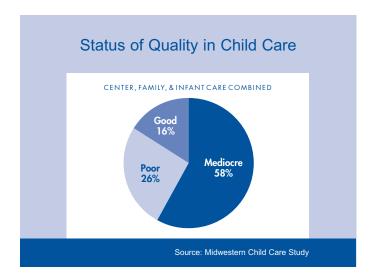
Home visiting, parenting education, and family support programs are most effective when they are staffed by skilled workers who establish relationships with vulnerable families and can respond to the unique needs of the families they serve.

Child care programs support children's development when the staff-to-child ratios are low and staff are well-trained. Alternatively, poor-quality child care programs actually impede children's development and may jeopardize children's safety and development.

Pre-school programs are effective when the staff are skilled, staff-to-child ratios are low, age-appropriate enriched learning environments exist, and special attention is provided to address individual child and family needs.

Research is clear that quality matters, and it can make a crucial difference in the lives of low-income children and families, in particular.

SLIDE 12



Speaker Comments

Unfortunately, not all early care and education programs and services are of high quality. In fact, studies across the country have shown that the quality of care in child care settings often is quite low, with most meeting minimum standards for safety and supervision, but some not even meeting that criteria.

The chart on this slide shows results from a study in the Midwest of licensed child care centers and registered family day care homes, including centers and homes providing infant care. Less than one-fifth of the care was observed to be of good quality, and over one-fourth was found to be poor. This study is typical of a number of studies that have been done around the country and was selected for this presentation because it is a very recent one.

While there is variation across states, no study has shown that even a majority of the care in a state is of good or excellent quality.

SLIDE 13

7. Investments Pay Off

Studies show high rates of return for early childhood investments that are:

- High quality
- Comprehensive
- · Aimed at those with the most to gain

Speaker Comments

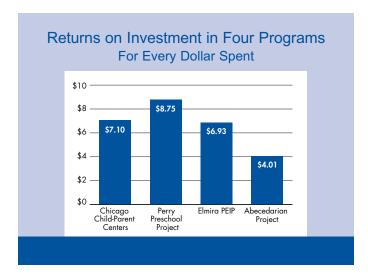
The final point is that there is a value to society—as well as to the individual child—for ensuring that children get the support they need. Investments in the early years to meet children's universal needs can reap large dividends to society.

The business community often uses benefit-cost or return-on-investment analyses to determine where to

invest. It calculates what its investment costs are, and what returns (in increased sales and profits) will result.

Several early childhood researchers have applied a return-on-investment analysis to their own examination of early childhood programs. In particular, four return-on-investment studies of high-quality, comprehensive early childhood programs have been conducted, all showing positive returns from the investments.

SLIDE 14

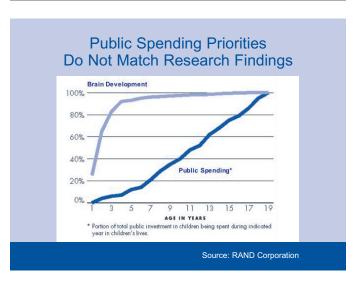


Speaker Comments

These four programs represent a range of program types. The Perry Preschool Project was an enriched pre-school program for low-income 3- and 4-year-olds, with strong parent involvement. The Elmira PEIP program provided nurse home visits for low-income mothers with newborns. The Chicago Child-Parent Centers involved pre-school programming, parent involvement activities, and early elementary after-school activities. The Abecedarian Project was an infant through pre-school combination of center-based child development services and parenting education, again with low-income families.

Each has shown that the initial investment (which varied from about \$6,000 to more than \$30,000 per child and family) resulted in returns of more than \$4 for every dollar invested. Most of these studies tracked the children into adulthood, examining the impact of the programs on long-term growth and development. These returns included reductions in government spending as the result of reduced use of special education services, reduced involvement in juvenile delinquency, reduced welfare and dependency costs, and reduced criminal justice costs.

SLIDE 15



Speaker Comments

While we recognize the importance of the earliest years of life and have identified successful programs that improve results for children in these years and produce lifelong gains, this slide shows that we currently invest very little in the earliest years.

The RAND Corporation, known for its work on defense and its hard-headed approach to research and analysis, has produced this full chart comparing brain growth to public spending in the country, the top line of which was used in an earlier slide. While 85 percent of the core structure of the brain develops in the first three years of life, only 5 percent of public investments in children occur during these years.

A 12-state study by the Child and Family Policy Center and Voices for America's Children (*Early Learning Left Out*) showed the disparities in investment in children's education and development by child age. For every dollar invested in school-aged children in the 12 states, only 13.7 cents was invested in the earliest learning years, which was only one-fifth the amount invested in college-aged youth.

Society has not yet developed an early care and education system to meet young children's needs as it has for older children.

SLIDE 16

Policy Implications "Invest in the very young." —James Heckman Nobel laureate economist

Speaker Comments

Building such an early childhood system requires new, and significant, public investments. Increasingly, however, people even outside the early childhood field have come to recognize the value and need—because society's future rests upon it. This has come from both the business community and those involved in economic research and analysis.

The Committee for Economic Development (CED), composed of corporate and educational leaders from around the country, has pressed for such investments, particularly for disadvantaged youth. Jim Ranier, former CEO of Honeywell, has spearheaded, with Bank of America, the expansion of United Way of America's Success by Six program around the country. Recently, the Federal Reserve Board Chair for Minnesota recommended establishing a \$1.5 billion endowment for early childhood services in that states. The chair concluded that, among all opportunities to invest in economic development, investing in early childhood would have the greatest overall returns.

This confirms the conclusion drawn by James Heckman, a Nobel laureate economist. Known for his research on work and training programs and their returns on investment, Heckman reviewed the literature in early childhood and examined the relative merits of public investments by different ages. His resulting synthesis of research led him to conclude that investments in early childhood offered the best rates of return—for children and for society. His conclusion was: "Invest in the very young."

Customizing the Presentation

Additional or replacement slides also can be developed that draw on state or community data to make these same seven points. The following are options for additional slides, using state or local data. Sample slides, primarily using Iowa data, can be found on the SECPTAN website.

1. Learning Begins at Birth.

- A Profile of Young Children. A slide showing the number of young children (0-4 or 0-5), the number of births annually, and the number of first-order births (children who are their mother's first-born), to provide a picture of the size and importance of the young child population (obtainable from census data and vital records data)
- Growth in Diversity—Young Children Leading the Way. A slide contrasting census data from 1990 and 2000 on the young child population and the total population by race and ethnicity, to illustrate the increasing diversity in the overall population and the even greater diversity of the young child population (obtainable from census data)

2. Nurture (as well as Nature) Matters.

• Characteristics at Birth—Opportunities for Prevention.

A slide showing the percentage of low birthweight babies, births to single mothers, births to teen mothers (under age 20), and births to mothers with late or no prenatal care, to indicate the need to support and strengthen parenting (obtainable from vital records data)

3. School Readiness Is More Than What Children Know (It Is Multidimensional).

- Available State or Community Kindergarten
 Assessments. A slide showing the results from
 any multi-dimensional kindergarten assessments
 conducted by the state or a school district, to
 underscore that children start school at different
 levels of preparation across health, social and
 emotional, and cognitive areas (available in some
 states and school districts)
- Data from the ECLS-K National Study. A slide from a Child Trends analysis of the national ECLS-K longitudinal study of a representative sample of kindergartners showing that many children start "behind" in at least one area but that the majority of children "behind" on language/cognition also have social and emotional or health issues (obtainable from Child Trends and in customized slides)

4. School "Unreadiness" Is Expensive.

• Public (State and Federal) Investments in Prevention and Expenditures on Pre-School. A slide showing the actual state and federal expenditures on prisons and corrections, child welfare, juvenile justice, and K-12 special and compensatory education (Title I), compared to expenditures on pre-school (state programs and Head Start), to break down the size of remediation costs in the state (available from state general fund expenditures and federal expenditures, but requires analysis)

5. Parents Work.

• Parents Work. State- or community-specific data replacing the supplied national data slide, to show the growth in the number and percentage of working mothers with young children and the consequent need for child care (obtainable from census data)

6. Quality Matters.

- Quality of Child Care Arrangements. A slide showing the results of a state survey of child care providers rating their quality, to emphasize the need for improved quality in child care settings (available in some states)
- Median Hourly Wages of Child Care Providers and Other Jobs. A slide showing the median (or mean) hourly wages for child care workers, pre-school teachers, kindergarten teachers, and all workers, to demonstrate that current reimbursements are very low and require improvement, if quality is to be improved (obtainable by state from the occupational employment wage survey for a wide variety of jobs, including those listed above)

7. Investments Pay Off.

• Early Learning Left Out—Investments by Child Age.

A slide showing the overall public investments in education and development by child age (available for selected states in Early Learning Left Out, published by the Child and Family Policy Center and Voices for America's Children)

Messages and Audiences

There are many audiences for the information provided in this toolkit. These include policy makers (state legislators, governors and their staff, executive office officials, and county and city officials)—as well as constituencies who can influence policy makers.

Different individuals and groups may respond to different messages—which is one of the reasons this rationale has been broken down into seven separate points.

Beyond the Usual Suspects: Developing New Allies to Invest in School Readiness, a companion resource brief

available from SECPTAN, describes some of the constituencies who can be enlisted to champion school readiness agendas. The resources provided here can be customized for various groups by emphasizing the messages to which they are most likely to respond. For example, as shown in the chart below, *Beyond the Usual Suspects* describes ten groups, their political cultures, and the messages that are most likely to resonate with them.

Beyond the Usual Suspects: Developing New Allies to Invest in School Readiness is available for download from the SECPTAN website (www.finebynine.org) or by contacting the Child and Family Policy Center.

Group	Message
Corporate leaders	Investing in school readiness makes good economic sense, with high rates of return to society in a skilled workforce.
Early elementary educators	Ensuring children start school ready to learn makes teaching more effective, for each individual child and for the whole classroom.
Health care professionals	Good health requires more than medical care; a medical home plays a critical role in meeting young children's health and developmental needs.
Law enforcement officials	Investing in prevention at an early age is the best crime control strategy.
Mid-level staff at state agencies	Building a school readiness system means developing standards and fostering cross-agency collaboration.
School superintendents	The achievement gap exists before children come to school: closing it early is needed to meet the No Child Left Behind Act regulations.
Semi-retired and newly retired	Our grandchildren deserve the best. Society, as well as parents, must respond to ensure that all children have the care and support they need.
Small business owners	Quality, dependable child care reduces absenteeism, increases worker productivity, and contributes to the local economy.
State legislators	Early learning programs are effective and efficient investments; they are sound uses of tax dollars.
TANF families and working poor	As parents and bread-winners, we need our children to have quality care and education while we must be at work.

Feedback Form

1. I made use of this publication in the following ways:
(If possible, attach products and materials produced using this publication.)
2. I found it helpful to alter or adapt the contents of this publication in the following ways:
(CFPC will consider your adaptations when publishing future editions.)
3. I would like to see the following additional resources published in the future, based on this publication:
4. The most useful part / aspect of this publication was:
5. The least useful part / aspect of this publication was:
6. I would would not like to be contacted to discuss my use of this publication and how the publication might be modified and improved.
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Please copy and send this completed form (or e-mail your responses) to: SECPTAN, c/o Child and Family Policy Center, 1021 Fleming Building, 218 6th Ave., Des Moines, IA 50309, Fax: 515/244-8997, info@cfpciowa.org.



About SECPTAN

The State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network (SECPTAN) provides current information about early childhood policy initiatives to state policy makers. It assists them in assessing the best available evidence and information about effective policies and practices in early childhood. The network is managed by the Child and Family Policy Center with funding from the Ford Foundation, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. For more information about SECPTAN, visit www.finebynine.org or contact Charles Bruner, Network Director, at 515-280-9027.

About this Series

This monograph is part of SECPTAN's series on early childhood issues, which also includes:

- Many Happy Returns: Three Economic Models that Make the Case for School Readiness
- Building an Early Learning System: The ABCs of Planning and Governance Structures
- Up and Running: A Compendium of Multi-Site Early Childhood Initiatives
- Beyond the Usual Suspects: Developing New Allies to Invest in School Readiness
- Measuring Children's School Readiness: Options for Developing State Baselines and Benchmarks
- School Readiness Policy and Budgeting: Template for Collecting State Baseline Information
- Child Welfare and School Readiness—Making the Link for Vulnerable Children
- Financing School Readiness Strategies: An Annotated Bibliography

- Health Care and School Readiness: The Health Community's Role in Supporting Child Development—New Approaches and Model Legislation
- On the Path to School Readiness: Key Questions to Consider Before Establishing Universal Pre-Kindergarten

These publications are available online at www.finebynine.org or by contacting the Child and Family Policy Center.

About the Child and Family Policy Center

The Child and Family Policy Center (CFPC) was established in 1989 by former Iowa legislator Charles Bruner, Ph.D., to better link research and policy on issues vital to children and families, and to advocate for outcome-based policies to improve child well-being. CFPC is active both statewide and nationally. In Iowa, the Child and Family Policy Center assists the state and communities in developing integrated, community-based, family-focused, and results-accountable services, particularly for vulnerable children. CFPC also produces a variety of reports, case studies, concept papers, and technical assistance tools on systems reform and community building that are widely used across the United States.



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