

WHY INVEST IN EARLY LEARNING?

Early Childhood: Building Blocks for Child Success

Children experience rapid brain development from birth to age 5; the timing and quality of early experiences combine to lay the foundation for the learning and behavior that follows.

The achievement gap begins before children ever enter kindergarten:

- By age 3, children living in poverty are exposed to 30 million fewer words than their peers not living in poverty
- By kindergarten, economically disadvantaged children are typically 12-24 months below national norms in language and pre-reading skills

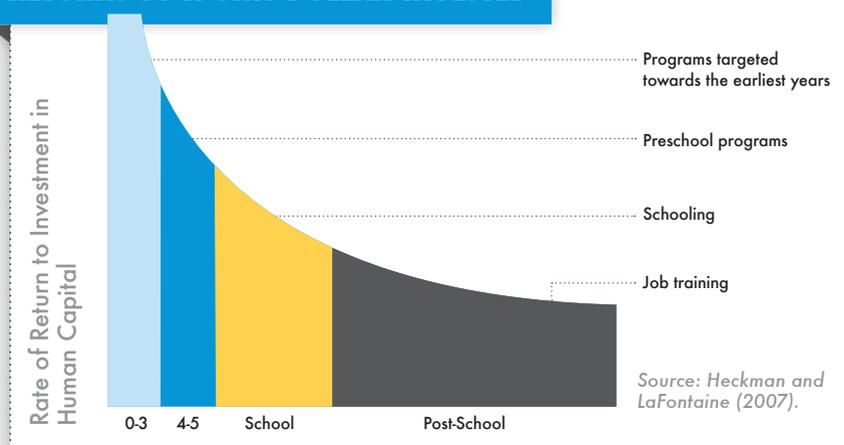
High-quality early childhood programs, especially for children most vulnerable, can ensure that children enter school ready to thrive:

- Intensive home visiting programs promote school readiness through secure attachment, promotion of health and safety, and improved home environments for learning
- Early learning programs help children develop social and emotional skills, build important pre-literacy and early math skills, and foster children's love of learning

THE ECONOMIC CASE FOR INVESTING IN OUR CHILDREN

- Early intervention can promote school achievement, reduce crime, foster workforce productivity and improve health
- High-quality early learning programs offer one of the highest returns of any public investment – **ranging from \$3 to \$9 for every dollar invested**

RETURNS TO A UNIT DOLLAR INVESTED



MECKLENBURG COUNTY EARLY LEARNING NEEDS

84,191

Children Birth to age 5

Twenty-three percent live below the poverty line

Source: US Census, American Community Survey
1-year estimates, 2012

14,000

Births each year

Only 10% of first-time mothers in need are supported by intensive home visiting

Source: N.C. State Center for Health Statistics

5,692

Children on wait list to receive financial aid for early care and education

Source: Child Care Resources, Inc., 2012

2,440

Four-year olds on the wait list for public Pre-Kindergarten programs

Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, 2013-2014

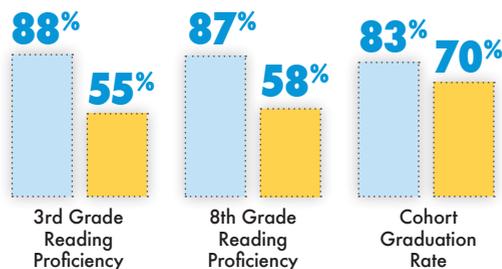
12,540

Kindergarteners enrolled in CMS

Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, 2013-2014

ACHIEVEMENT GAP IN CMS

Not Economically Disadvantaged Economically Disadvantaged Students



Source: NC Department of Public Instruction, 2011-12



Council for Children's Rights

LEADING OUR COMMUNITY TO STAND UP FOR EVERY CHILD'S RIGHT TO BE SAFE, HEALTHY AND EDUCATED. GOOD INFORMATION FOR GOOD DECISIONS. BETTER INVESTMENTS FOR BETTER OUTCOMES.

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

National program models have demonstrated significant positive outcomes for children.

Children in the **Nurse Family Partnership** intensive home visiting program had greater cognitive and language development, and scored higher on achievement tests.

NFP SCHOOL READINESS OUTCOMES

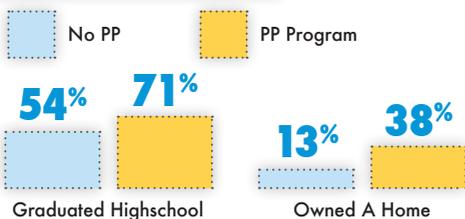
- >> 50% reduction in language delays at 21 months
- >> 67% reduction in behavioral problems at age 6

Source: Olds et al. (2004)

The Perry Preschool Program

demonstrates that early education can be an important investment in the future.

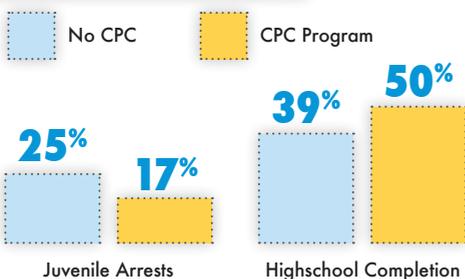
PERRY PRESCHOOL PARTICIPANTS AT 27



Source: High Scope Educational Foundation (2003)

Children in the **Chicago Child Parent Center Preschool** were less likely to drop out of high school, be placed in special education and be held back a grade.

CPC CHILD OUTCOMES



Source: Reynolds et al. (2002)

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EARLY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Quality matters greatly. High-quality programs can produce substantive long-term gains, but underfunded programs with low standards produce few significant benefits.

Locally, there are promising indicators of quality:

- > North Carolina is one of only 5 states to meet all 10 of 10 national quality standards for public Pre-Kindergarten.
- > 90% of young children receiving assistance to attend child care centers in Mecklenburg County are served by 4- or 5-star programs, the highest quality ratings in the state.
- > Investment in evaluation of publicly funded programs is needed to continually improve quality and maximize positive outcomes.



WHAT'S POSSIBLE IN MECKLENBURG COUNTY

All children have early learning experiences that support healthy development and prepare them for success in school.

Our Role: Council for Children's Rights will continue to advance evidence-based early learning initiatives through research, policy advocacy, and facilitation of collective planning efforts.

Recent community wins include:

- > Grant awarded to implement Triple P, an evidence-based parent education and support program
- > Early Literacy Coordinator hired at Library and community expansion of literacy initiatives Raising a Reader and "March Madness for Reading"
- > Expansion of infant mental health services and increased support for young children who have experienced domestic violence

YOUR ROLE: ADVOCATE FOR FUNDING FOR EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS

- > Expand local implementation of intensive home visitation programs
- > Maintain local Pre-K funding through Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and increase state funding for NC Pre-K
- > Increase public and private financial aid dollars for early care and education



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Children's
Rights**

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