

Investing Today in North Carolina's Workforce of Tomorrow



Our state's economic vitality depends on how we invest today for tomorrow. Smart investments in children's early years produce the best outcomes in education, health and economic well-being for North Carolina.

Preparing for the Future

By 2020, 67% of jobs in North Carolina will require some post-secondary education.ⁱ To meet this challenge, we have to start early. After years of research into how to most effectively and efficiently develop human capital, Nobel Laureate Professor James J. Heckman concluded, "The foundation for school, career and life success is largely determined through the development of cognitive and character skills beginning in children's earliest years."

***"Third grade reading proficiency is key to reversing the skills gap, and it will help create sustainable economic growth and ensure that students graduate from high school ready to succeed in our global economy." – James Goodnight
CEO, SAS***

Professor Heckman's research shows that the earlier the investment, the greater the return.

Building a Strong Foundation

Professor Heckman's findings are rooted in how brains develop.

Brain scientists have discovered that during children's earliest years, their experiences are built into their bodies – shaping the brain's

architecture, affecting how biological systems develop and impacting a child's cognitive, social and emotional skills for the rest of his or her life. In other words, **brains are built, not born.**

The early years are so defining that by the time a child turns eight, his or her third grade outcomes can predict future academic achievement and career success. When we invest in creating opportunities for optimal child development, children are more likely to read on grade-level by the end of third grade, graduate from high school, stay healthier throughout their lives, get higher paying jobs and contribute more toward the costs of important public services.ⁱⁱ

By investing in our youngest children, we create a stronger North Carolina.

Creating Human Capital

67%

of NC jobs will require some post-secondary education by 2020



38%

of NC 4th graders scored at or above reading proficiency in 2015^{vi}



25%

of NC 4th graders from economically disadvantaged families scored at or above reading proficiency in 2015^{vii}



\$4.4 Billion

amount U.S. businesses lose annually due to employee absenteeism as a result of child care issues^{viii}



\$8.3 Billion

annual lost wages of working families due to lack of child care^{ix}



75% & 50%

of mothers and fathers respectively in the US that say they have passed up work opportunities, switched jobs or quit to tend to their children^x



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“Early learning is just good business. That’s why the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce strongly supports funding early childhood education as ‘key economic infrastructure’ for workforce preparation.”
– Kit Cramer, CEO, Greater Asheville Chamber of Commerce



What Works

Fortunately, decades of research have demonstrated what works to build strong brains - health and development on track beginning at birth, supportive and supported families and communities, and high quality birth-through-age-eight learning environments with regular attendance.

Numerous studies show strong and lasting results, including:ⁱⁱⁱ

- ✔ Improved school readiness and success in school
- ✔ Higher third grade reading and math scores
- ✔ Reduced school absenteeism
- ✔ Reduced youth crime and delinquency
- ✔ Higher high school graduation rates
- ✔ Stronger job earnings

Strong Returns on Investing in Children

When we invest in early childhood, both individuals and society win through the creation of a skilled workforce, lower health care costs and lower judicial system costs due to a reduction in crime.

“There are very few government programs that have any return close to this. Early childhood programs are one of the highest returns we have available to make in American society, so it’s foolish not to use it.” *Nobel Laureate Dr. James Heckman*

Business leaders understand the power of early education and are becoming champions for greater investments in our youngest children.

Actions for Business Leaders^{iv}

1. **Encourage reading to young children--and get involved!**
The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends reading daily to children starting at birth. You and your team can volunteer to read in an early learning center or school or your company can partner with a Campaign for Grade-Level Reading collaborative in your community.
Learn more at: www.buildthefoundation.org/cglr.
2. **Adopt policies in your business that support working parents.** Implement programs and policies to help your employees become better informed and more engaged in their children's learning and development.
3. **Promote early learning as part of economic development.** Strong early learning policies and programs strengthen community economic development. From supporting working parents to realizing the long-term benefits for children who attend high quality programs, investing in children results in better schools and more educated workers.^v
4. **Encourage business organizations and networks to adopt education policy positions that include investments in high quality early learning.** Many chambers have included such a statement in their public policy agenda. Ensure that your chamber, as well as other business networks such as Rotary, Kiwanis, and others, adopts this priority.
5. **Convey to policymakers your support for public investment in early education.** Business leaders can be powerful and impartial messengers in support of investment for early learning through a variety of forums: public meetings, personal communications and through the media.

ⁱ Georgetown Public Policy Institute, “Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements through 2020,” 2013.

ⁱⁱ ZERO TO THREE, “ZERO TO THREE Policy Pocket Card,” 2015.

ⁱⁱⁱ Gregory Camilla, “Meta-Analysis of the Effects of Early Education Interventions on Cognitive and Social Development,” University of Colorado, 2010.

^{iv} Mark D’Alessio, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, “13 Things That Business Can Do to Support Early Childhood Education,” 2014.

^v Art Rolnick & Rob Grunewald, “Early Childhood Development: Economic Development With a High Public Return,” 2003.

^{vi} National Center for Education Statistics, 2015.

^{vii} National Center for Education Statistics, 2015.

^{viii} Childcare Aware, “Parents and the High Cost of Childcare,” 2016 Report.

^{ix} Sarah Jane Glynn and Danielle Corley, Center for American Progress, “The Cost of Work-Family Policy Inaction,” 2016.

^x Danielle Paquette and Peyton M. Craigbill, The Washington Post, “The Surprising Number of Moms and Dads Scaling Back at Work to Care for Their Kids,” August 6, 2015.