



Making the Case for Investing in Early Childhood: Talking Points

*“Skill begets skill; motivation begets motivation. Early failure begets later failure.” --
James Heckman, Nobel Laureate in economics at the University of Chicago*

Value message - *Investing in kids pays off*

Barrier messages

1. *Our state and national economic outlook requires we act now to grow the skilled and educated workforce needed to compete in a global economy*
 - McKinsey & Company, a global management consulting firm advising the world’s leading businesses, governments, and institutions, asserts that poor reading skills of American students compared to those in other countries has led to a productivity gap costing the U.S trillions of dollars and creating “the equivalent of a permanent, deep recession in terms of the gap between actual and potential output in the economy.”
 - U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said “We have to educate our way to a better economy.”
 - Children must be ready to learn when they arrive at school: be in good health, have the support of a strong family, feel safe, and have positive social interaction skills, language skills, the motivation to learn, emotional and behavioral self-control, and physical skills and capacities.
 - Early childhood investments are the necessary springboard for educational achievement.

2. *Leading economists agree that early investments have the greatest returns*
 - Every \$1 invested in high quality early care and education services for low-income children saves as much as \$17 on welfare, criminal justice, special education and other social expenses
 - Michigan saved \$1.1 billion in 2009 alone due to investments made in the state’s school readiness efforts over the past 25 years.
 - Children who succeed in school earn more money as adults, thereby generating more tax revenue – four times more, in fact, than the cost of the programs that helped them succeed.
 - Early investments in education, health, child care and family supports save in

the short term by increasing the chances that children enter school ready to learn and succeed, and in the long term by improving student achievement, and increasing college access and lifetime earnings, while reducing dropout rates, juvenile and adult crime, teen pregnancy, mental health problems and welfare dependence.

3. *Even the most aggressive efforts to rebuild Michigan's economy and reform education will fail if we don't invest when the brain is forming the fastest and laying the foundation for a lifetime of learning.*
 - By age 5, as much as 90 percent of a child's intellectual and emotional brain wiring has been set for life.
 - On average, 35 percent of approximately 150,000 Michigan children entering kindergarten each year are not ready to learn, and that the lack of opportunity to attend a preschool program is a primary factor for children starting school already trailing behind their peers.
 - That means Michigan is failing 50,000 five-year-olds a year before they ever get to the schoolroom, and another 200,000 children under the age of 5 who are not getting the help they need to prepare for school.
 - Nearly 9 of every 10 kindergarten teachers report that the time needed to work with students who are academically behind when entering school has an impact on their ability to teach the rest of the students.
 - In all, 11% of Michigan students repeat kindergarten at a cost of \$100 million a year.

Ask – *Protect funding for early childhood programs and invest in our children, our future.*

Vision - *The bottom line for the state: a more educated workforce, a stronger economy, and reduced costs for taxpayers.*