

Guest commentary: Michigan leaders recognize the wisdom of investing in preschoolers

By Debbie Dingell and Doug Luciani/Children's Leadership Council of Michigan

We tip our hats to Michigan's governor and the Legislature [for funding expansion of the state's Great Start Readiness Program](#). This program offers high-quality preschool to needy families of 4-year-olds.

Culturally and scientifically, evidence abounds that nurturing and investing in children before they reach kindergarten pays extraordinary dividends. For each dollar spent on early education and care, there are \$7 of savings in grade repetition, social welfare and corrections. Expanding pre-K can save \$100 million in special education costs and the high cost of kindergarten repetition. Business leaders – people who think about returns on investment – strongly support public and private investments in the building of talent.

We business leaders care deeply about guiding our K-12 and higher education institutions toward excellence and investing in them in smart ways.

We also understand that the earlier we invest in our state's children, the greater the return. Along with our business colleagues throughout Michigan, we have asked our state officials to put a high priority on early education and care. They have.

The governor and Legislature are behind getting children from all families, regardless of income, into high-quality preschool programs. We support them and applaud them, regardless of their political affiliation. They are leaving a lasting legacy to Michigan, its children and its economic future.

We're not blind to the partisan and ideological gulfs. But an issue like early childhood investment – where the payback is so high – is a slam dunk. Smart investments benefit us all.

Tots count. They will pursue the education they need and eventually enter our workplaces. The better their start, the better off they, and we, will be.

To the rest of us: Please follow Michigan's policy leadership and invest in our state's children now.

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