

Business Champions for Young Children

Concerned about the future of their companies, their states and the nation, many employers want to see public resources committed to evidence-based programs that will set young children on the right course to become productive, healthy adults.

America needs employees who are well prepared—but we're not getting them:

- The majority of fourth or eighth graders are not proficient in both math and reading in any state.¹
- Only 25 percent of 17- to 24-year-olds would qualify to serve in the military. The rest cannot meet physical, mental or behavioral standards for service—standards that are similar to those many businesses use in hiring.²

This failing workforce pipeline can be repaired—but we have to start early. The first years of brain growth and emotional development form the building blocks of success in school, work and life.

During the early years of life, children's brains develop 700 synapses—neural connections that transmit information and support learning—every second.³

Kids who start off right—with stimulating, secure home environments and access to quality early education, health care (including dental care) and nutrition—are far more likely to become productive members of society. Studies of pre-kindergarten education for disadvantaged children have shown a benefit-cost ratio of approximately 7:1.⁴ A high-quality, voluntary home visiting program for at-risk parents had a return of better than 5:1.⁵

Companies benefit from effective early childhood policies in many ways:

- A well-prepared workforce;
- A future customer base with the means to buy their products and services;
- More productive current employees; and
- Reductions in public expenditures on criminal justice, welfare and other remedial services.

Join business leaders from across the nation in advocating for public policies with a proven record of economic return—starting with high-quality programs that foster early childhood development.



Join leaders who are making a difference:

Viking Industries founder Richard Alexander and other executives helped persuade the **Oregon** legislature to significantly increase the state's investment in pre-k and infant-toddler programs.

Raven Industries CEO Ron Moquist organized **South Dakota** executives to launch an early learning program with economic development funds

George Kaiser, chairman of BOK Financial Corporation, advocated for the expansion of early childhood services in **Oklahoma**.

The Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce and Goldman Sachs supported new early childhood investments in **Utah**.

The New Mexico Business Roundtable championed the 2011 New Mexico Early Childhood Care and Education Act.

Former Continental Airlines CEO Larry Kellner helped win increases in pre-k funding in **Texas** in 2010.

Executives in Denver were key to winning passage of the city's 2006 pre-k ballot initiative.

In 2010, executives from **"Virginia JobOne: Business Leaders for Smart Beginnings"** protected early childhood funding and turned opponents into supporters.

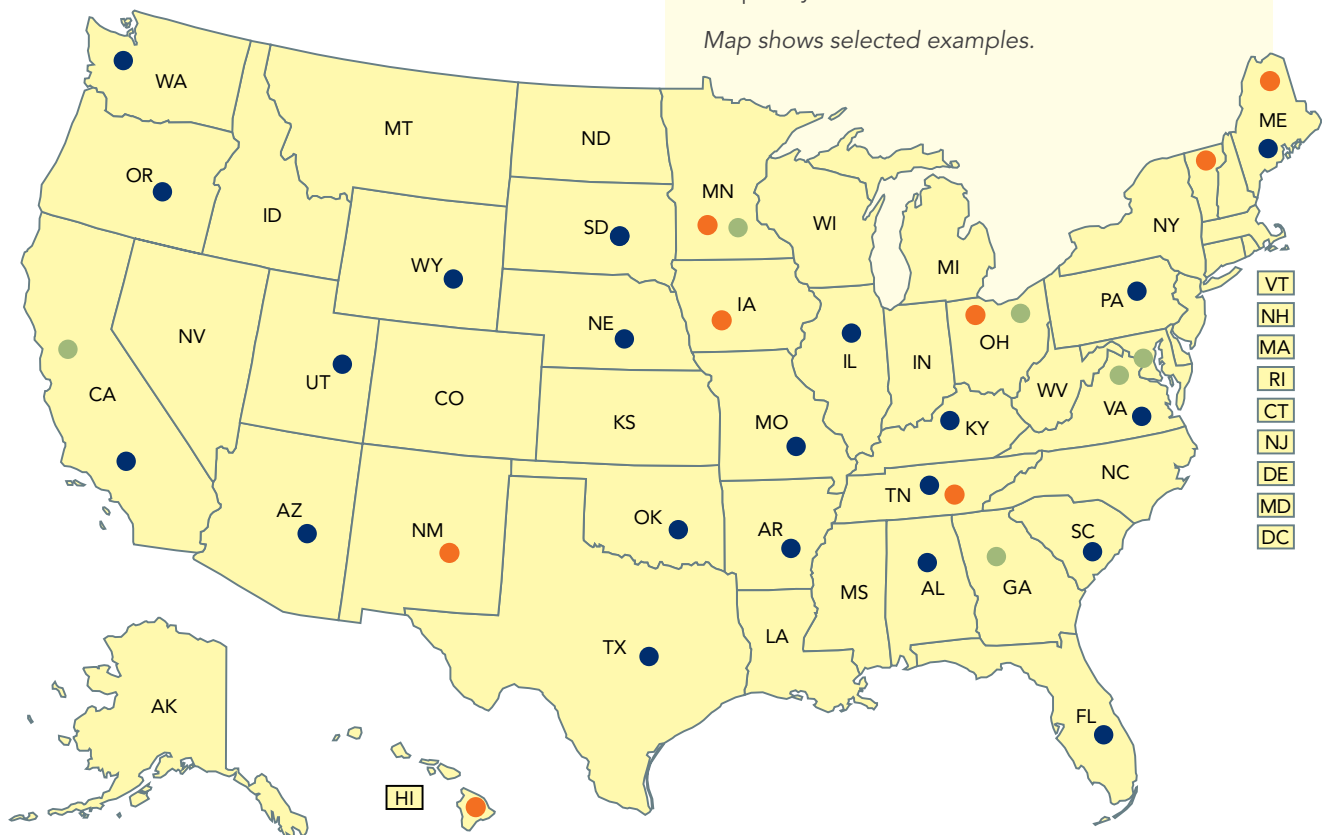
The Business Council of Alabama's 2010 Government Affairs Conference spotlighted early education as a state priority.

Entergy Arkansas CEO, Hugh McDonald, championed this issue, and the state has increased funding for pre-k 17-fold.⁶

MAP KEY

- **Federal Reserve Bank leaders** have spoken out in support of early education as a key economic development strategy.
- **Leaders from state and local chambers of commerce** championed early childhood policy.
- **State Business Roundtables** have taken up early childhood.

Map shows selected examples.



SPEAKING OUT

“No economy can succeed without a high-quality workforce, particularly in an age of globalization and technical change ... Research increasingly has shown the importance for both individuals and the economy as a whole of both early childhood education as well as efforts to promote the lifelong acquisition of skills. The payoffs of early childhood programs can be especially high.” —**Ben Bernanke, chairman, Federal Reserve Board**

“It was blindingly obvious that the most efficient, fiscally responsible way to spend money is on young children. It’s also the most rewarding.”—**J. B. Pritzker, managing partner, The Pritzker Group, Chicago**

“Quality pre-k is an important early childhood education and development issue, but it is also a critical workforce issue. We know that the return on today’s investments in pre-k will be a stronger workforce in the future.”—**Dave Adkisson, president and CEO, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce**

“Business leaders need to be the unlikely allies for children and be willing to proactively help find sustainable revenue for early education.”—**Mara Aspinall, CEO, On-Q-ity, Boston**

“Banking is all about helping people provide for their futures. High-quality early learning programs will help create both future customers with the disposable income our business needs and well-prepared young people who will become our employees.”—**Lloyd Lamm, retail president, capital region, First National Bank of Pennsylvania, member, Pennsylvania Early Learning Investment Commission**

National business organizations support early learning:⁷

- The Institute for a Competitive Workforce (an affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce)
- Society for Human Resource Management
- Center for Energy Workforce Development
- The Manufacturing Institute/
National Association of Manufacturers
- The Business Roundtable/Corporate Voices for Working Families

CONTACT US

If you would like to add your voice to this critical discussion or learn more, contact us at:

Partnership for America’s Economic Success

info@partnershipforsuccess.org
www.PartnershipforSuccess.org

Steps to a Stronger Economy and Workforce

- 1 Visit and support high-quality early childhood programs.
- 2 Highlight the workforce and economic development benefits of quality early childhood programs.
- 3 Host public events and talk to the media about the importance of early childhood.
- 4 Ask federal, state and local lawmakers to support quality early childhood programs.

This brief was written by Sara Watson, director, Partnership for America's Economic Success.

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Endnotes

1 National Center for Education Statistics, “National Assessment of Educational Progress.” (2009) <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2010/section2/table-mat-3.asp> and <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2010/section2/table-rd2-3.asp>.

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3 Shonkoff, J. (2009, April 27). “The Science of Early Childhood Development and the Foundations of Prosperity.” PowerPoint presented at the Pennsylvania Business Leader Summit on Early Childhood Investment, Harrisburg, PA. <http://paprom.convio.net/site/PageServer?pagename=elic2009>.

4 Reynolds, A., Temple, J., Robertson, D., & Mann, E. (2002). “Age 21 Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Title 1 Chicago Child-Parent Centers.” *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 24, no. 4, 267-303.

5 L. Karoly, M. Rebecca Kilburn, and Jill Cannon, *Early Childhood Interventions: Proven Results, Future Promise*, RAND Corporation, 2005.

6 National Institute for Early Education Research. “The State of Preschool: 2003 State Preschool Yearbook” and “The State of Preschool: 2009 State Preschool Yearbook.” 2003 and 2009. <http://nieer.org/yearbook2003/pdf/yearbook.pdf#page=57> and http://nieer.org/yearbook/pdf/yearbook_AR.pdf.

7 See: <http://icw.uschamber.com/press-release/us-chamber-commerce-underscores-importance-early-childhood-education>; http://www.partnershipforsuccess.org/uploads/20100616_PAESSHRM.web.pdf; http://www.partnershipforsuccess.org/uploads/20101018_CEWDPAESWebcopy.pdf; <http://www.nam.org/Issues/Official-Policy-Positions/Human-Resources-Policy/HRP-01-Education-and-the-Workforce.aspx>; http://www.partnershipforsuccess.org/uploads/20100624_ManufacturingInstituteCaseStatement062410.pdf; <http://www.cvwf.org/system/files/Early%20Childhood%20Education%20Principles%202009.pdf>.