

Access to Early Childhood Education Yields Lifelong Results: ACTION STEPS for Business Leaders



Expanding access to quality early childhood education programs is:

- an economic development strategy, and
- a taxpayer savings strategy.

Nobel Laureate economist James Heckman released new research in 2016 that found:

- Every dollar spent on high-quality, birth-to-five programs for disadvantaged children delivers a 13% annual return on investment.
- Children were not the only beneficiaries – the economic benefits of the additional wages earned by parents with access to high-quality care paid for the cost of the program after five years.

Heckman, J., Garcia, J., Leaf, D., Prados, M., Center for the Economics of Human Development at the University of Chicago. The Life Cycle Benefits of an Influential Early Childhood Program. Working Paper 2016-035. (Dec.2016). <https://heckmanequation.org/resource/lifecycle-benefits-influential-early-childhood-program/>

Business leaders understand the value of investing in early care and education because it achieves the following:

- Supports the healthy development and school readiness of children while parents are working,
- Promotes employee reliability and stability,
- Spurs business and community economic growth, and
- Results in a skilled talent pool and workforce in future years.



What Business Leaders Can Do

Be informed. Ask employees about their child care arrangements. Inquire about any challenges they have in accessing early learning programs in your community. Many parents with young children will have a story to tell. Some leading businesses document these experiences to better understand employee work and family challenges, and to help educate the public and policymakers about the need to invest in high-quality care.

Provide child care resource information. For example, include information about how to find child care, critical questions to ask child care providers, and how quality child care can make a difference for children in new hire orientation packets. Post materials for employees on bulletin boards in the lunchroom, near the photocopier, and provide content information on the company web site. Your local child care resource & referral agency will have localized information to share, as well as about child care subsidy assistance for low wage workers, or information about tax credits for which families might be eligible such as the Federal Dependent Care Tax Credit or the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Determine available employer tax benefits to support child care. Talk to Human Resources staff about potential tax benefits available for employers to assist employees with child care costs. For example, employers are eligible for a federal tax credit in return for sponsoring child care on-site, sponsoring child care slots in a local community center for employees, and supporting child care resource & referral agencies in your community to help your employees find child care.

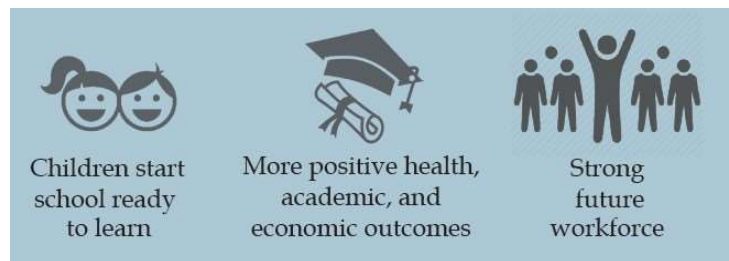
Join forces with advocates in your community.

Support initiatives to strengthen the quality of child care and early learning. Understand the goals and programs in your community so that as an employer you can be an effective partner. Join early learning coalitions that are working to expand access to quality child care and early learning programs. Sometimes it is not what is said by a stakeholder that can make a difference, but which stakeholder says it.

Educate other business leaders through state or local chamber of commerce or economic development council meetings. Often state and local chambers of commerce create a public policy agenda and convene members to hear presentations or discuss priority topics. Prepare to speak out about the need for high-quality child care and early learning settings. Ask fellow employers to join in supporting investment in quality child care and early learning programs, and urge that it be placed on the public policy agenda.

Understand the issues and connect with your state and local legislators. Convey to policymakers your support for public investment in early education. Let them know how important it is to view quality early learning as an economic development strategy that is vitally important to children, employees, employers, communities, and citizens.

Raise visibility. Prepare and submit op-eds and letters-to-the-editor, post on social media, and engage other business leaders to help raise the visibility of quality early education and care as a key link to economic growth, development, and success.



Be an Early Childhood Education Business Champion

Let the Committee for Economic Development (CED) know if we can be helpful in customizing any information to your state or community.

CED staff can help with:

- ✓ fact sheets
- ✓ talking points
- ✓ testimony
- ✓ policy papers
- ✓ infographics
- ✓ draft op-eds or letters-to-the-editor
- ✓ blogs
- ✓ social media
- ✓ speakers
- ✓ networking
- ✓ online employer child care toolkits
- ✓ strategic planning about how to engage the business community and become champions for early learning access and quality.

Business leaders are powerful messengers. Be a change agent in your community and work with CED to expand access to high-quality early childhood education programs. These programs help children start school ready to learn, perform at grade level, and graduate high school college- and career-ready. They are less likely to repeat a grade, be referred to special education, or engage in behavior that leads to incarceration.

For more information about how CED can assist you in supporting high-quality early learning programs, contact Cindy Cisneros, Vice President of Education Programs at CED – ccisneros@ced.org.

QUALITY CHILD CARE MATTERS!

Building Brains
Birth to Age 5 Is Critical



The brain is built rapidly, laying the foundation for social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development

Investments in Quality Child Care Lead to



Lower costs for elementary school remediation and grade retention

Increased high school graduation rates, future wages and tax receipts