



STRONG START KY

PRICHARD COMMITTEE FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Early Childhood Education & Development

The investments made in the education and development of children before they reach kindergarten pays the greatest dividends in terms of future success in school, the workforce and life. Currently, only 50 percent of Kentucky's children arrive in kindergarten ready for early success. Over time, as we increase the number of children ready for kindergarten we will decrease the need for costly remediation, increase reading and math proficiency in 3rd grade, and close achievement gaps before they become persistent.

The Earliest Investments Show the Biggest Returns

High quality preschool for our at risk children, characterized by developmentally appropriate curriculum and high standards for teaching, health and safety, is a solution for our persistent achievement gap issues. Nobel Prize winning economist James Heckman's research clearly shows that our best return on investment is in the early years, birth–five. The cost of later remediation far exceeds intervening early. Thanks to the legislature in 2014, Kentucky preschool access currently stands at 160% of poverty, but many of our most vulnerable are still at risk.

SUPPORT: Expand eligibility and access to quality preschool for 3 and 4 year olds to 200% of poverty

HANDS is a voluntary program of mentoring and coaching for young families which helps to get children on the right track from before birth. Especially for at risk families, the impacts the HANDS program has had are truly life changing. Compared to comparable families not enrolled, HANDS families saw 47% fewer cases of child abuse and neglect, 50% fewer ER visits and a 26% improvement in parent education levels, just to name a few. Expansion of this program is an effective way to dramatically increase the chances for future success.

SUPPORT: Increase investment in the Health Access Nurturing Development Services (HANDS) program

Making it Work for Families

The only way children can benefit is if they are there every day to receive instruction. Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) makes childcare affordable for families and frees up time for parents to work. Child care assistance actually decreases the need for participation in other assistance programs by allowing parents to successfully gain and maintain employment. CCAP makes it possible for low-income families to access quality child care by covering a portion of the cost of child care for parents that are working or receiving educational training. Kentucky currently supports families up to 150% of poverty.

SUPPORT: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) – expand to 200% of poverty, increasing access & flexibility

Local Collaboration Leverages Public Investments

Thanks to the investment of the 2014 legislature, Kentucky is expanding state funded preschool to 160% of poverty in the 2015-2016 school year. Expanding the number of children served presents challenges and opportunities at the local level. The Prichard Committee encourages collaboration between public preschool, Head Start and child care to serve more children in the highest quality settings. When communities blend local resources - public preschool and child care assistance - children can be served in environments that best suit their needs while also supporting families that rely on the services to keep working.

For more information: www.prichardcommittee.org/strongstartky