



Spend more on pre-kindergarten, crime fighters urge

Thursday, June 07, 2007

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Top law-enforcement officials from the city and county today urged the state Legislature to support Gov. Ed Rendell's request for \$75 million in the state budget to enroll 11,000 children in pre-school programs.

The governor would pass the money along to pre-schools run by school districts, Head Start, nursery schools and child-care centers. The money would be available statewide but focus on children who are at risk of school failure.

At a press conference this morning, city police Chief Nathan E. Harper, acting county Sheriff William P. Mullen, Deputy District Attorney Laura Ditka and others released a report that they said documents the crime-prevention benefits of quality pre-kindergarten instruction.

The study found that at-risk children excluded from a pre-kindergarten program in Michigan were five times more likely become chronic lawbreakers than those who attended the program.

Chief Harper, Sheriff Mullen and Ms. Ditka said they would urge legislators during ongoing budget negotiations to support Mr. Rendell's Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts initiative. Pittsburgh alone could receive up to \$2.4 million in new state money to provide pre-K services to an additional 300 children.

In Pittsburgh now, they said, 2,200 mostly low-income 3- and 4-year-olds receive "quality" early childhood services, but there are at least 2,000 other children with no access to such services.

The press conference was held at the Small World Early Learning and Development Center II, Downtown.

More details in tomorrow's Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

[Back](#)

Copyright © PG Publishing Co., Inc. All Rights Reserved.