



Below are some messages to use when talking about the benefits of pre-K:

## **Talking Points for High-Quality Pre-K: Why Pre-K Matters**

### **Pre-K Attendance**

- Children least likely to attend pre-K are those whose parents have the least education and least income and whose mothers do not work outside the home.
- Children of mothers with at least a high school diploma, but not a BA degree, have lower rates of attendance – 65 percent at age 4 and 40 percent at age 3.
- Children of high school dropouts have the lowest participation rates: 49 percent at age 4 and 28 percent at age 3. Children whose parents have the least education remain by far the least likely to attend preschool at ages 3 and 4.

### **Benefits to Children**

- While preschool is good for all children, research shows low-income students benefit the most. A study of the Chicago Child-Parent Centers followed a control group of children for several years. The study looked at low-income children who attended preschool versus similar low-income children who did not. The study found children who attended preschool were nearly 30 percent more likely to graduate from high school, 40 percent less likely to repeat a grade and 32 percent less likely to be arrested as a juvenile.
- Less special education and more grade promotions. Children from the Early Childhood Initiative in Allegheny County – 4-year-olds already at severe risk of failing – showed special education and grade retention rates below 2 percent when they got to school, in districts topping 21 percent special ed and retention rates. High-quality pre-K helps improve the school readiness of young children by enhancing their social, emotional and cognitive development.
- Children who attend high-quality pre-K experience increased income potential.

### **Successful Students**

- Pre-K increases high school graduation rates.
  - Chicago children who attended a pre-K program were 29 percent more likely to graduate from high school than their peers who did not have pre-K.
- Pre-K helps children do better on standardized tests.

- Michigan fourth graders who had attended pre-K passed the state's literacy and math assessment tests at higher rates than their peers who had no pre-K.
- Pre-K reduces grade repetition.
  - Maryland fifth graders who attended pre-K were 44 percent less likely to have repeated a grade than their peers who did not attend pre-K.
- Pre-K reduces the number of children placed in special education.
  - Among Chicago children, those who attended pre-K were 41 percent less likely to require special education services than their peers who did not attend.
- Better test scores and grades.
  - Children from quality pre-K get better test scores in later grades and are likelier to graduate from high school. Participation in early childhood programs can result in IQ gains.

### **Why Pre-K Matters**

- 90 percent of brain growth occurs before kindergarten.
- Kids who start behind, stay behind.
- Nearly 90 percent of the children who are poor readers in first grade will still be poor readers by fourth grade.
- One third of children entering kindergarten cannot recognize the letters of the alphabet. More than half do not know basic math concepts and one in three does not know how to pay attention in class. As a result, teachers are forced to spend more time on basic classroom skills and behavior instead of the fundamentals of math and reading.

### **Long-term Impact**

- At 21, those persons receiving high-quality early childhood programming were more likely to score higher on IQ, reading, and math tests, and be enrolled in or graduated from a 4-year college.
- The majority of reading problems faced by today's adolescents and adults could have been avoided or resolved in the early years of childhood. Longitudinal study of Head Start children found significant differences in absentee rates during elementary school between children attending Head Start and a control group that didn't attend Head Start.

### **Costs/Societal Impact**

- Pre-K is a vital part of workforce development. Pennsylvania's employers support pre-K investments because they equip young learners with the skills for school success and after graduation, workplace competence.
- Saving money. Every \$1 invested in high-quality pre-k saves taxpayers up to \$17.
  - Pre-K results in savings by reducing the need for remedial and special education, welfare, and criminal justice services.
- Better citizens. As adults, children from quality pre-kindergarten are likelier to be married, with higher educational attainments and better-paying jobs.

- Pre-K is an effective investment. The children of today are the workforce of tomorrow.

### **Responsible Adults**

- Pre-K reduces crime and delinquency.
  - Chicago children who did not attend pre-K were 70 percent more likely to be arrested for a violent crime by age 18 than their peers who had been pre-k participants.
- Pre-K lowers rates of teen pregnancy.
  - North Carolina children who attended pre-K were less likely to become teen parents than their peers who did not attend pre-K: 26 percent vs. 45 percent.
- Pre-K leads to greater employment and higher wages as adults
  - Forty-year-old adults in Michigan who attended pre-K as children were more likely to be employed and had a 33 percent higher average income than their peers who did not have pre-K.
- Pre-K contributes to more stable families.
  - Forty-year-old adults in Michigan who attended pre-K as children were more likely to report that they were getting along very well with their families than their peers who did not attend pre-K: 75 percent vs. 64 percent.

### **Introduction to Messaging to Specific Audiences:**

Oftentimes in a communications campaign the message is tailored to different audiences. Why? It's important to highlight the basic motivation of each target audience member, and depending on what a person does for a living, what part of a city he lives in, or whether or not he's a parent might determine his receptivity to your message.

For example, a business leader understands numbers: expenses versus revenue. Therefore, it's important to talk about pre-K from an asset perspective, how pre-K is a wise investment because it saves money by reducing expensive remedial education and welfare involvement.

Below is a list of talking points to be used when messaging to specific audiences:

### **Messaging to Specific Audiences**

#### ***To Lawmakers:***

- Kids who start school behind, stay behind;

- Child development is linked to economic development;
- Pre-K is an effective investment that reaps rewards: Approximately \$17 is saved for every \$1 invested.
- Children who enter kindergarten from high-quality pre-K get better test scores in later grades and are likelier to graduate;
- Children who enter kindergarten from quality pre-K have better reading, language and social skills than those who didn't go to preschool;
- High-quality pre-K builds stronger communities and better citizens – mature, responsible and productive members of society

***To Business Community:***

- Pre-K is a vital part of workforce development. Pennsylvania's employers support pre-K investments because they equip young learners with the skills for school success and after graduation, workplace competence. Pre-K is an effective investment: The children of today are the workforce of tomorrow;
- High-quality pre-K results in reduced crime, reduced welfare involvement, improved earnings and higher tax revenues later in life.
- Research shows that every \$1 invested in pre-K saves as much as \$17 in future societal costs.

***To Law Enforcement:***

- High-quality pre-K results in a reduced crime rate and less juvenile justice adjudication;
- Prevention is a proven crime control strategy;
- High-quality pre-K creates better citizens.

***To Faith-based leaders:***

- High-quality pre-K provides an opportunity for foundational growth that all should have;
- Speak in terms of a justice/fairness frame: equality for all kids – equal access for high-quality pre-K.

***To Educators:***

- Ensuring children start school ready to learn makes teaching more effective, for each individual child and the whole classroom. High-quality pre-K is a part of school readiness.

***To Grandparents:***

- Our grandchildren deserve the best.