

# ***Why Pennsylvania Needs Pre-K Today***



# Pre-K Today

- Pre-K Today is a non-partisan campaign launched by a broad-based coalition from around the Commonwealth committed to efforts to advance dedicated state financing for voluntary high-quality pre-kindergarten programs designed to assure that Pennsylvania's children enter school ready to learn and prepared to succeed.

# Pre-K Today

- Pre-K Today supports the Governor's \$75 million proposal in the 2007-08 budget to create Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts.
- If enacted, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts will provide approximately 11,000 3- and 4-year-olds with voluntary, high-quality pre-K delivered through a mixed service delivery system in which all providers comply with State Board of Education pre-K regulations and the state's early learning standards.

# Governor's Pre-K Proposal

- Programs will operate in public schools, Head Start, child care centers and nursery schools
- Programs will operate on a school year, be part-day and full-day and be locally determined

# Governor's Pre-K Proposal

- Priority given to children living in school districts with over 30% of the children enrolled in free and reduced lunch and other providers who serve children at-risk of education failure as determined by poverty, English language learners, disability.

# High-risk Indicators

- About one in three children under age 5 lives in low-income households in PA (200% of poverty or below)
- Approximately 13% of students require special education services
- 30% of Pennsylvania's 3<sup>rd</sup> graders scored below proficient on the PSSA reading test in 2006; nearly 20% scored below proficient in math

# Pre-K Benefits Children

- Children with quality pre-K experiences enter kindergarten with better reading, language, math, cognitive, and social skills. *(Peisner-Feinberg, Burhcinal, Clifford, Culkin, Howes, Kagan, Yazejian, Byler, Rustici, and Zelazo. The Children of Cost, Quality and Outcomes Study Go to School, 2000.)*

# Pre-K Benefits Children

- Children who attend high-quality pre-K enter school more prepared and achieve greater education success, including fewer grade retentions, less remediation, higher standardized test scores and higher graduation rates. *(National Research Council. From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development. 2000.)*

# Pre-K Benefits Children

- Children from the Early Childhood Initiative in Allegheny County – 4-year-olds already at severe risk of education failure – showed special education and grade retention rates below 2 percent when they got to school, in districts toppling 21 percent special education and retention rates. *(UCLID Center at the University of Pittsburgh and Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh: Allegheny County Early Childhood Initiative Evaluation, March 2002.)*

# Pre-K Benefits Schools & Communities

- The High/Scope Perry Preschool documented a return to society of more than \$17 for every tax dollar invested in the early care and education program through savings in special education, delinquency, crime control, welfare, lost taxes and other areas.

# Pre-K Produces Long-lasting Effects

- “Adults at age 40 who had the [high quality] preschool program had higher earnings, were more likely to hold a job, had committed fewer crimes, and were more likely to have graduated from high school than adults who did not have preschool.” *(High Scope/Perry Preschool Project)*

# Pre-K Produces Long-lasting Effects

- Quality pre-K helps to prepare children for success in adulthood. Children who attend high-quality early education programs are likelier to mature into responsible citizens – likelier to be married, with higher education attainment and better paying jobs. *(Early Learning, Later Success: The Abecedarian Study. University of North Carolina. 1999.)*

# Return on Investment

- According to a recent study conducted in Pennsylvania, school districts investing in pre-K could recoup as much as 78 percent of their spending in pre-K in education savings. *(Clive Belfield for the PA BUILD initiative: Invest Now or Pay More Later: Early Childhood Education Promises Savings to Pennsylvania School Districts. 2006.)*

# Return on Investment

- Some small school districts with very high special education expenditures would recoup as much as \$1.16 for every dollar. *(Clive Belfield for the PA BUILD initiative: Invest Now or Pay More Later: Early Childhood Education Promises Savings to Pennsylvania School Districts. 2006.)*

# How Pre-K Benefits Business

- Four in five (81%) of American businesses surveyed said public funding of voluntary pre-kindergarten for all children would improve America's workforce.

*("American Business Leaders' Views on Publicly Funded Pre-kindergarten and the Advantages to the Economy," Committee for Economic Development, December 2005, [www.ced.org/docs/poll\\_earlyed2006zogby.pdf](http://www.ced.org/docs/poll_earlyed2006zogby.pdf))*

# Pennsylvania Business Agrees

- "Success [in early childhood education] will only be achieved by creating a public-private partnership of the largest scale."

Jim Rohr, Chairman, PNC Inc.,

*Keynote presentation at "Building the Economic Case for Investments in Preschool" 12/3/04, Washington, D.C.*

# Pennsylvania Business Agrees

- “In order to offer a high-quality workforce, we need to provide a high-quality education to all of Pennsylvania’s children. In order for quality education to prepare our children to become the quality workforce we need, that education needs to begin at birth.”

Ed Donley, former President and Chairman of Air Products & Chemicals, Inc., Bethlehem, PA

*(“Elect candidates who’ll help children prepare to learn,” Allentown Morning Call, November 5, 2006)*

# Pre-K Today

- The best investment in economic development that government and the private sector can make is in the healthy development of children.

Art Rolnick, PhD  
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Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis

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