



2007/08 Budget Message Points

What is Pre-K Today?

- Pre-K Today is a statewide 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.

Public Policy Goal

- Pre-K Today supports the Governor's \$75 million proposal in the 2007-08 budget to create Pre-K Counts. If enacted, 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.

Description of Pennsylvania Pre K Counts Proposal

- The Pennsylvania Pre K Counts program, established by the Department of Education, will make quality pre-kindergarten opportunities available to 3 and 4 year old children and their families across the Commonwealth.
- Governor Rendell's proposed investment of \$75 million will provide funding for more approximately 11,000 preschool children to voluntarily attend quality half- and full-day programs in schools, Head Start, child care centers and nursery schools in the 2007-2008 school year.
- Funding will be made available to all Pennsylvania communities through an RFP process with priority given to school districts and other providers who serve children at-risk of education failure.
- All children in participating communities from age 3 until they enter kindergarten are eligible. Pennsylvania Pre K Counts supports the inclusion of children with diverse needs.
- All programs will be voluntary and operate on a 180-day school calendar.
- Any school district, Head Start program, or nursery school that complies with pre-K program standards such as those advanced by the State Board of Education may apply through the RFP process. Child care centers with a STAR 2 rating or above may also apply.
- All eligible programs may apply, but programs in school districts serving 30% or more children participating in the free or reduced lunch program, or individual programs focusing on services to at-risk children will receive priority in funding.
- The Pennsylvania Pre K Counts initiative builds on the work of the Pre K Counts Public-Private Partnership for Educational Success, a three-year project funded by leading Pennsylvania foundations and supported by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Pre-K in Pennsylvania Today

- Currently, the Commonwealth funds pre-K through the Education Accountability Block Grant and the Head Start Supplemental Appropriation.
 - The Accountability Block Grant can be used to fund pre-K and 10 other education programs designed to improve student achievement, including reduced class size and full-day kindergarten. According to the Department of Education, approximately \$16 million of the ABG is being used by 44 school districts to provide pre-K programs for nearly 4,300 children in 2006-07 school year.
 - The Head Start Supplemental Appropriation totals \$40 million in FY 2006-2007 to provide pre-K to 5,800 children.

-
- About 49,000 3- and 4-year-olds are enrolled in Head Start or public school pre-K and K4 programs. This amounts to 16% of the Commonwealth's nearly 299,000 3- and 4-year-olds.

Pre-K Creates Successful Students

Quality pre-K is proven to increase student success by building students' social, emotional and cognitive development.

- Children with quality pre-K experiences enter kindergarten with better reading, language, math, cognitive, and social skills than those without pre-K. (Peisner-Feinberg, Burhcin, Clifford, Culkin, Howes, Kagan, Yazejian, Byler, Rustici, and Zelazo. The Children of Cost, Quality and Outcomes Study Go to School, 2000.)
- 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.)
 - According to a recent study conducted in Pennsylvania, school districts investing in pre-K could recoup as much as 78% 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.)
 - 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.)
 - 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 Creates Successful Communities

Successful communities require successful schools that help our children develop socially and intellectually from day one.

- Giving children the basic social, emotional and academic tools improves all schools and communities.
- Children who learn how to learn very early are more likely to realize later academic and career success. America needs a 21st century education system that gives all children the tools to succeed in school, the workplace, and as active citizens.
- 90% of brain development occurs before age five; it is important to stimulate young minds as early as possible.
- 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.)
- The most recent cost benefit analysis of the "Perry Preschool Program" in Michigan has revealed that for every \$1 spent, an estimated \$17 was saved in lower public expenditures for welfare, education and other services. (Schweinhart, L.J.. The High Scope/Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40: Summary, Conclusions and Frequently Asked Questions. Ypsilanti, MI: High Scope Educational Foundation. 2005.)

States Across America are Increasing their Investment in Pre-K

(The following information comes from The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) State of Preschool Yearbook 2005 and related materials from NIEER's website at www.nieer.org)

- Illinois' "Preschool for All" program - funded through an Early Childhood Block Grant - began July 1, 2006. (This was an expansion of the existing Pre-K Program for At-Risk Children.) The state's investment in preschool services for 3- and 4-year-olds is \$283,246,505. The pre-K expansion seeks to serve all 3 and 4-year-olds whose parents choose to participate.
- New York State Gov. Spitzer pledges to make state-funded preschool education available to all the state's 4-year-olds by the time his administration ends. The state's current investment in pre-K is roughly \$198 million.
- Preschool also is universally available on a voluntary basis in Georgia and Oklahoma where the states spend \$276 million, \$79 million, respectively. Florida began a new voluntary pre-kindergarten initiative in the fall of 2005 at a cost of approximately \$387 million.