


PRE-K: SETTING KIDS UP FOR SUCCESS

The relationship between school success and economic status is present as early as kindergarten, and unfortunately, kids who start behind tend to stay behind. Low-income kids consistently lag behind their non-low income peers in the four areas of child development (social-emotional, language and communication, early literacy, and mathematics) that define kindergarten school readiness. Well-funded, high-quality pre-kindergarten programs have been shown to substantially shrink the school readiness gap, giving our most vulnerable kids a greater chance to succeed.

Currently, Texas school districts offer half-day, voluntary pre-K for four-year-olds who are low income, have limited English proficiency, are in foster care, or meet other measures of need. Studies show that kids who attend high quality pre-K have higher high school graduation rates, lower rates of teen pregnancy, and fewer run-ins with juvenile justice. They also routinely do better on standardized reading and math tests. Benefits of pre-K also extend well into adulthood—adults who attended pre-K earn more, are less likely to be arrested for violent crimes, and have higher rates of employment.

Investing in pre-K benefits kids, and it financially benefits the state in the long run. A recent study shows that for every dollar invested in high-quality pre-K, \$3.50 is saved by the state of Texas, while another study indicated a 7 to 10 percent annual return on investment in pre-K. These returns are linked, in part, to kids who are better prepared for their K-12 education (e.g. lower retention rates), a lower crime rate, and decreases in participation in public programs.



*LOW INCOME KIDS WHO ATTENDED PRE-K ARE **2.1 TIMES MORE LIKELY** TO BE SCHOOL READY THAN LOW-INCOME KIDS WHO DID NOT.*



EVERY DOLLAR INVESTED IN PRE-K SAVES TEXAS A MINIMUM OF \$3.50.

Texas missed the mark on 8 out of 10 Pre-K quality standards.

- Teacher BA
- Teacher specialized pre-k training
- Asst. teacher: Child Dev. Assoc. credential
- Class size ≤ 20
- Staff-child ratio $\leq 1:10$
- Health screenings/referrals
- Min. 1 meal/day
- Reg. site visits by state/local agency
- Comprehensive early learning standards
- Teacher in-service ≥ 15 hrs/yr

However, to get the highest return on investment, pre-K must meet the level of quality our kids deserve. Unfortunately, Texas is ranked last in the nation in terms of pre-K quality. Pre-K funding can help improve quality by providing smaller class sizes and highly trained teachers.

WE DARE TEXAS!

By sufficiently investing in our public schools, we ensure that more kids have a better shot at success in school and in life. Investing in students now means a happier, healthier, and better prepared Texas workforce in the future. We dare Texas to fund public education at a level adequate to meet student need and Texas constitutional requirements.

WE (DOUBLE) DARE TEXAS!

Access to high-quality pre-k is essential for helping Texas kids grow up happily and successfully. We dare Texas to expand half-day pre-k to full-day pre-k for low-income and other eligible kids, so that all children enter kindergarten ready to learn. We dare Texas to plan long-term, and enrich kids' minds now so that they can grow into thriving adults in the future.



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At the Center for Public Policy Priorities, we believe in a Texas that offers everyone the chance to compete and succeed in life. We envision a Texas where everyone is healthy, well-educated, and financially secure. CPPP is an independent public policy

organization that uses data and analysis to advocate for solutions that enable Texans of all backgrounds to reach their full potential. We dare Texas to be the best state for hard-working people and their families.

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