



*Working to make North Carolina
the best place to be and raise a child.*

FACT SHEET

QUALITY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION HAS SUBSTANTIAL BENEFITS FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

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Quality early care and education helps prepare children for later academic and economic success. As of December 2005, there were at least 184,000 children ages 0-5 enrolled in child care settings across North Carolina. Child care subsidies allow working families access to affordable, reliable child care. Currently over 30,000 North Carolina children languish on a waiting list for child care subsidies.

Quality preschool programs lead to short and long-term academic success.

- Studies repeatedly find that children involved in high quality early childhood programs are more advanced socially, cognitively, and grammatically than their peers who have not attended these early childhood programs.¹
- The North Carolina-based Abecedarian Early Childhood Intervention Project found that at age 21, participants were twice as likely to still be in school or to have attended a four-year college.²
- The Chicago Child-Parent Center Program found that by age 20, participants in the quality early education program were 28% more likely to graduate from high school.³
- The Head Start program found that four-year-olds who had participated in its course could understand and use more words than the children who had not attended their course.⁴
- A 37-year longitudinal study of the Perry Preschool Program found that at-risk children who received quality early care and education for two years experienced significant improvements that lasted until at least age 40. Compared to their at-risk peers, they were more likely to graduate high school, maintain employment and own homes. They are less likely to need special education, receive welfare or be arrested.⁵

Benefits from high-quality preschool programs are long lasting.

- A 15-year longitudinal study of low-income children in Chicago, who participated in a school district preschool program, found a 40% reduction in grade retention, a 41% reduction in the need for special education, and a 29% increase in the rate of high school completion.⁶
- A review of 36 studies of early childhood programs including preschool found “sizeable” long-term effects on school achievement, grade retention, placement in special education and social adjustment.⁷
- Quality pre-kindergarten and childcare programs have produced dramatic, long-term impacts on the lives of children from disadvantaged families, including increasing high school graduation rates and decreasing crime.⁸

Preschool programs have been shown to reduce criminal activities.

- The North Carolina-based Abecedarian Early Childhood Intervention Project, found that participants in the early care and education program were 29% less likely to smoke marijuana on a regular basis at age 21.⁹
- The Perry Preschool Program found that adults who participated in the quality early care and education program as children were significantly less likely to be incarcerated as adults.¹⁰

- In response to a Mason-Dixon Polling and Research Survey, an overwhelming 71 percent of the nation's law enforcement leaders chose providing "more after-school programs and educational child care programs as the most effective strategy for reducing youth violence and crime."¹¹
- A 15-year Chicago longitudinal study of low-income children found a 33% reduction in the rate of juvenile arrests of those children who participated in school district preschool programs.¹²

The child care industry is a significant industry in North Carolina.

- In 2004, the National Economic Development and Law Center released the first-ever Economic Impact Study on the North Carolina Child Care Industry. Research demonstrates that child care is a significant income-generating, job-creating industry sector, contributing \$1.5 billion in annual gross receipts and accounting for more than 46,000 jobs in North Carolina alone.¹³
- The child care industry helps other industries as well, as it allows parents to work productively outside the home, and attend higher education programs that update their skills. Nearly one-in-three North Carolina workers has a child under age 18 and one in ten has a child under age six.¹⁴ One-in-six North Carolina parents of low-income children had to quit, refuse, or change a job because of problems with child care.¹⁵ This, in turn, can lead to other disruptions in family life or impede the ability of the worker to stay and advance in a current job.
- Quality child care programs help prepare young children for opportunities in the new economy and attract business to North Carolina with the state's skilled workforce.¹⁶ Several decades of research clearly demonstrate that high-quality; developmentally appropriate early childhood programs produce short- and long-term positive effects on children's cognitive and social development.¹⁷
- According to the latest research by Bright Horizons Family Solutions, employer-sponsored child care options provide companies the increased ability to recruit and retain a skilled workforce. When employees have access to reliable, safe, high-quality child care they are able to focus more on their work duties, which, in turn, increases their productivity. All of these issues directly impact the bottom-line of the company by boosting recruitment, reducing turnover, lowering absenteeism, and increasing productivity.¹⁸

¹ Suzanne W. Helburn and Carollee Howes, *Child Care Cost and Quality, The Future of Children, Financing Child Care*, vol. 6, no 2, Summer/Fall 1996.

² Masse, Leonard N., A Benefit Cost Analysis of the Abecedarian Early Childhood Initiative. 2002. Available at <http://nieer.org/resources/research/AbecedarianStudy.pdf>

³ Arthur Reynolds and Judy Temple, "Study: Early Intervention Cuts Crime, Dropout Rates," May 8, 2001 news release from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Study published in May 9, 2001 issue of the *Journal of Medical Association*.

⁴ Martha Abbot-Shim, *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, vol. 8, no 2, pp 191-1214, cited in National Institute for Early Education Research, Winter 2004.

⁵ Lawrence J. Schweinhart et. al., *Lifetime Effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40*; High/Scope Press; Ypsilanti Michigan. 2005.

⁶ Arthur Reynolds and Judy Temple, "Study: Early Intervention Cuts Crime, Dropout Rates," May 8, 2001 news release from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Study published in May 9, 2001 issue of the *Journal of Medical Association*.

⁷ W. Steven Barnett, "Long-Term Effects of Early Childhood Program on Cognitive and School Outcomes," *The Future of Children: Long-Term Outcomes of Early Childhood Programs*, vol 5, no 3, Winter 1995.

⁸ Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, "Head Start Improves Achievement & Reduces Crime." Available at <http://www.fightcrime.org/index.php>

⁹ Masse, Leonard N., A Benefit Cost Analysis of the Abecedarian Early Childhood Initiative. 2002.

¹⁰ Lawrence J. Schweinhart et. al., *Lifetime Effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40*; High/Scope Press; Ypsilanti Michigan. 2005.

¹¹ Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, "Preventing Crime with Pre-Kindergarten: A Critical Investment in North Carolina's Safety," Available at <http://www.fightcrime.org/reports/PreKstate/PreKnc.pdf>

¹² Arthur Reynolds and Judy Temple, "Study: Early Intervention Cuts Crime, Dropout Rates," May 8, 2001 news release from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Study published in May 9, 2001 issue of the *Journal of Medical Association*.

¹³ Saskia Traill and Jen Whol, North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. and National Economic and Development Law Center, *Economic Impact Study on North Carolina Child Care Industry*. 2004. Available at <http://www.smartstart-nc.org/national/nceis04.html>.

¹⁴ Saskia Traill and Jen Whol, North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. and National Economic and Development Law Center, *Economic Impact Study on North Carolina Child Care Industry*. 2004. Available at <http://www.smartstart-nc.org/national/nceis04.html>.

¹⁵ Action for Children North Carolina, Outcomes by Income: Low-income children fare worse on many indicators. December 2005. Available at http://www.ncchild.org/images/stories/December_2005_Outcomes_by_Income_Report.pdf

¹⁶ Saskia Traill and Jen Whol, North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. and National Economic and Development Law Center, *Economic Impact Study on North Carolina Child Care Industry*. 2004. Available at <http://www.smartstart-nc.org/national/nceis04.html>

¹⁷ National Association for the Education of Young Children, A Call for Excellence in Early Childhood Education, Early Years Are Learning Years. July 2000. Available at <http://www.naeyc.org/policy/excellence.asp>

¹⁸ Bright Horizons Family Solutions, *The Real Savings From Employer-Sponsored Child Care: Investment Impact Study Results*. Available at http://www.brighthorizons.com/Site/pages/benefits_employer.aspx?Nav=emp2