



NEVADA ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN

Early Childhood Education Policy Position for Nevada - 2008

The Nevada Association for the Education of Young Children (NevAEYC), a state affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, has close to 1,000 members in all parts of the state. AEYC members work in child care centers, preschools and public schools, private homes, community agencies, and other settings. Together, members support excellence, inclusion, innovation, and community in the early childhood profession. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is dedicated to improving the well-being of all young children, with particular focus on the quality of educational and developmental services for all children from birth through age 8. Founded in 1926, NAEYC is the world's largest organization working on behalf of young children with nearly 100,000 members, a national network of over 300 local, state, and regional affiliates, and a growing global alliance of like-minded organizations.

The Importance of Quality Early Childhood Education: Individual and Societal Benefits

Quality early childhood education is critical to both the intellectual and social well-being of young children. Children in low-quality care are more likely to require remedial services, commit crimes, drop out of school, and as adults are more likely to end up incarcerated, less likely to own homes, and earn substantially less income. Providers who receive specific education and training to work with young children provide higher quality child care. Quality early childhood education centers are also key resources for reaching families of young children to provide outreach and education regarding child abuse and neglect prevention, as well as health promotion for children and families.

Two of the most widely studied programs, the High Scope/Perry Preschool¹ and the Carolina Abecedarian², followed their participants to the ages of 27 and 21, respectively. These longitudinal studies reveal that children participating in quality programs are less likely to be held back a grade or be placed in special education programs. The studies also indicate that reduced dropout rates and improved test scores are benefits of early childhood education programs. More benefits have become apparent as the participants matured into early adulthood – lower crime rates, greater college attendance and labor force participation, as well as higher income levels and homeownership.

Economists estimate that investments in Early Care and Education yield an approximate 16% return. That means for every dollar spent, society at large reaps \$16 worth of rewards through decreased needs for intervention and remedial services, decreased welfare assistance, as well as increased stability of employment, marriage, and homeownership in adulthood.³ Another study also estimates that “by improving the skills of a large fraction of the U.S. workforce, these programs for poor children would raise the gross domestic product (GDP), reduce poverty, and strengthen U.S. global competitiveness.

¹ Schweinhart, Lawrence J., Benefits, Costs, and Explanation of the High Scope/Perry Preschool Program. Presented at the meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Tampa, FL (April 26, 2003).

² Campbell, Ph.D, Frances and Craig Ramey, Ph.D, Principal Investigators. Carolina Abecedarian Study. Website: <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/%7Eabc/index.htm>.

³ Rolnick, Art and Grunewald, Ron. *Early Childhood Development: Economic Development with a High Public Return*. March 2003. Accessed online at <http://www.mpls.frb.org/pubs/fedgaz/03-03/earlychild.cfm?js=0>

Within 45 years the increase in earnings due to Early Childhood Development investments would likely boost the Gross Domestic Product by nearly one-half of 1%, or \$107 billion (in 2004 dollars). Crime rates and the heavy economic costs of criminality to society are likely to be substantially reduced, as well, with savings of about \$155 billion (in 2004 dollars) realized by 2050.”⁴

Early Childhood Education in Nevada

- ✓ Licensed care in Nevada can accommodate only 15-16% of the need for care. In rural areas, licensed care is available for less than 10% of children in need of care. Families are left with few options. This means that almost a quarter of a million children in Nevada are cared for by families, friends, or neighbors; or they may be left unattended.⁵
- ✓ Throughout Nevada, approximately 10% of licensed child care centers are considered high quality by nationally recognized standards. This means that fewer than 4,300 high quality placements are available to serve more than 300,000 Nevada children in need of care.⁶

Needed Investments in Early Childhood Education in Nevada

- Invest additional funding for early childhood in Nevada to increase the amount of licensed child care available, especially in rural counties, thereby bridging the gap between the need for and the lack of high quality care.
- Fund the licensure of child care in Nevada through state funds. The Bureau of Child Care in the Division of Child and Family Services is currently funded through federal quality set-aside dollars. Licensing regulations are baseline standards intended to ensure safe and healthy settings for children, not to meet high quality standards.
- Increase the amount of funding for state Pre-Kindergarten programs in public schools. Although funding levels have seen small increases since 2005, less than 3% of children ages 3 to 5 in Nevada are enrolled in state funded Pre-K programs.⁷
- Ensure matching funds to maximize federal funding available to support quality early childhood throughout the state. The State of Nevada needs to provide a \$7 million match to maximize federal funding to support early care and education programs.

For more information, please visit the NevAEYC website at www.nevaeyc.org.

Additional Resources for Early Childhood Education:

The Children’s Cabinet

<http://www.childrencabinet.org>

Every Child Matters in Nevada

<http://www.everychildmatters.org>

National Association for the Education of Young Children

<http://www.naeyc.org>

National Center for Children in Poverty

www.nccp.org

NV Department of Education

<http://www.doe.nv.gov/standards/standprek.html>

⁴ Lynch, Robert. *Exceptional Returns: Economic, Fiscal and Social Benefits of Investment in Early Childhood Development*, October 2004

⁵ *2006 Demographics Report Child Care in the State of Nevada*. The Children’s Cabinet, Inc. Child Care Resource and Referral Department

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ W. Steven Barnett, Jason Hustedt, Kenneth Robin, and Karen Schulman, The State of Preschool: 2006 State Preschool Yearbook, National Institute for Early Education Research, 2006.