

EARLY CHILDHOOD MATTERS TO BUSINESS

74%

of business leaders say a skilled workforce is the most important factor to business success.

Zogby International (2005)

The competitiveness of small, medium and large companies depends on having a pipeline of talented, educated employees with the skills needed in today's economy:

- Problem-solving
- Communication
- Decision-making
- Critical thinking
- Motivation
- Collaboration

95%

of CEOs indicate that their companies suffer from skills shortages.

Business Roundtable (2012). Workforce Skills Survey

In Arizona, as in most of the United States, we don't have enough workers with the skills that employers need. Nearly half the American workforce lacks the basic education and communication skills required to get a job and advance. One quarter of Arizona's students don't graduate from high school.

That's the bad news. The good news is that we know how to solve this problem.



INVESTED IN EARLY CHILDHOOD YIELDS A \$16 RETURN

"The return on investment from early childhood is extraordinary."

Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis

90% of critical brain development occurs before kindergarten. The skills and abilities employers are looking for — focus, self-discipline, motivation and collaboration — all start to take root in the first five years of life.

The ROI from quality early education programs for children birth to age 5 is well established and quantifiable. Study after study demonstrates returns ranging from 4x to 16x, depending on the program analyzed, with strong, positive effects on:

- Kindergarten readiness
- Language, math and social skills
- K-12 test scores
- High school graduation
- College enrollment

Investing in quality early childhood programs for infants, toddlers and preschoolers is the only proven strategy to produce such returns. It also correlates strongly to less crime and less dependence on social services later in life.

The bottom line is clear:

- Quality early childhood education for children birth to age 5 increases school readiness, which leads to workforce readiness.
- Allocating resources to support the health and learning of our young children is a critical economic development strategy.

We know the importance of early childhood.

But don't take our word for it:

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

"(T)he capacity for developmental skills begins in the first five years of life. This is the beginning point for a person's creativity, communication, team working, problem-solving and critical thinking skills."

The Committee for Economic Development

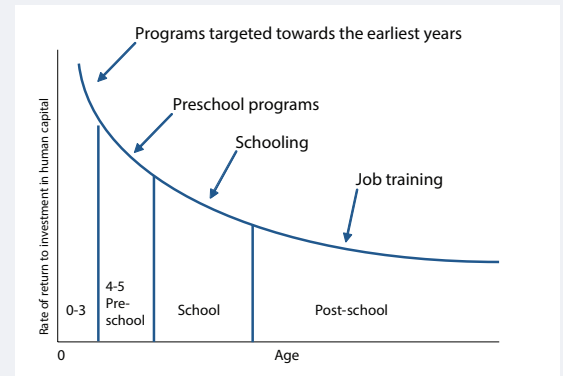
"Business leaders and policymakers should consider investment in young children one of the most effective strategies to secure the future economic strength of their communities and the nation."

The Business Roundtable

"America's continuing efforts to improve education and develop a world-class workforce will be hampered without a commitment to early childhood education."

Returns to a Unit Dollar Invested

Return to a unit dollar invested at different ages from the perspective of the beginning of life, assuming one dollar initially invested at each age



The Heckman Equation

James Heckman

Professor of Economics, University of Chicago
Nobel Prize Winner

What can you do?

The voice of business leaders like you is crucial to Arizona's economic future.

1

CONNECT

with First Things First in your Arizona community to learn more and join the early childhood movement.

2

SUPPORT

high-quality early learning programs in your area.

3

ADOPT

policies in your business that support working parents.

4

TELL

policymakers that you support public investment in early childhood.

FIND YOUR local First Things First regional partnership council at **FirstThingsFirst.org**.

 **FIRST THINGS FIRST**

A statewide organization created by Arizona voters, First Things First partners with communities to give all Arizona children the opportunity to arrive at kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed.

To learn more, visit us at [FirstThingsFirst.org](https://www.FirstThingsFirst.org)

READY FOR SCHOOL. SET FOR LIFE.