

Access to Early Childhood Education Yields Lifelong Results and Prosperity:

ACTION STEPS FOR BUSINESS LEADERS

MAY 2021

Expanding access to quality child care is:

- an economic development and economic growth strategy,
- an investment in our future workforce,
- a taxpayer savings strategy, and
- a way to give all children an equitable start in life.

Nobel Laureate economist James Heckman's most recent research found:

- Every dollar spent on high-quality, birth-to-five programs for disadvantaged children delivers a 13% annual return on investment.
- Significant gains for children are realized through better outcomes in education, health, social behaviors, and employment.
- The economic benefits of the additional wages earned by parents with access to high-quality care paid for the cost of the program after five years.

Heckman, J., Garcia, J., Leaf, D., Prados, M., Center for the Economics of Human Development at the University of Chicago. The Life Cycle Benefits of an Influential Early Childhood Program. Working Paper 2016-035. (Dec. 2016).

Business leaders understand that investments in early care and education:

- Support the healthy development and school readiness of children while parents are working,
- Promote employee reliability and stability,
- Catalyze business and community economic growth, and
- Result in a skilled workforce in future years.

WHAT BUSINESS LEADERS CAN DO

Internally

BE INFORMED OF EMPLOYEE NEEDS.

Ask your employees about their child care arrangements and any challenges they have in accessing early learning programs in your community. Some leading businesses document these experiences to better understand employee work and family challenges, inform internal strategies to better support employees (e.g., begin or expand child care employee benefits), and to help educate the public and policymakers about the need to expand access to and invest in high-quality child care.

PROVIDE CHILD CARE RESOURCE INFORMATION.

Include information about how to find child care, critical questions to ask child care providers, and how quality child care can make a difference for children in new hire orientation and onboarding packets. Post materials for employees on site and through the company web site. Your local [child care resource & referral agency](#) will have information about local child care providers, child care subsidy assistance for low wage workers, or tax credits for which families might be eligible such as the federal Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit or the Earned Income Tax Credit.



IDENTIFY AVAILABLE EMPLOYER TAX BENEFITS FOR ASSISTING EMPLOYEES.

Talk to Human Resources staff about potential tax benefits available for employers to assist employees with child care costs. For example, employers are eligible for a federal tax credit in return for sponsoring child care on-site, sponsoring child care slots in a local child care program for employees, and supporting child care resource & referral agencies in the community to help employees find child care.

WHAT BUSINESS LEADERS CAN DO

Externally

JOIN WITH ADVOCATES IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

Support initiatives to strengthen the quality of child care and early learning. Understand the goals and programs in your community so that as an employer you can be an effective partner. Join early learning coalitions that are working to expand access to quality child care and early learning programs. The business stakeholder voice can make a difference with public and other officials. If employees cannot find child care because supply is low, catalyze public/private partnerships to support new high-quality child care options.

EDUCATE BUSINESS LEADERS THROUGH STATE OR LOCAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MEETINGS.

State and local chambers of commerce often create a public policy agenda and convene members to hear presentations or discuss priority topics. Prepare to speak out about the need for high-quality child care and early learning settings. Ask fellow employers to join in supporting investment in quality child care and early learning programs, and urge that it be placed on the public policy agenda.

UNDERSTAND THE ISSUES AND CONNECT WITH YOUR STATE AND LOCAL LEGISLATORS.

Convey to policymakers your support for public investment in early education and in public-private partnerships. Let them know how important it is to view quality early learning as an economic development strategy important to children, employees, employers, communities, and families. Share how the lack of high-quality child care is impacting your workforce.

RAISE VISIBILITY IN THE MEDIA.

Prepare and submit op-eds and letters-to-the-editor, post on social media, and engage other business leaders to do the same and help raise visibility about the importance of quality child care and the link to economic growth, development, and success.



Children start school ready to learn



More positive health, academic, and economic outcomes



Strong future workforce

BE AN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CHAMPION

Business leaders are powerful messengers. Be a change agent in your community and work to expand access to high-quality early childhood education programs. These programs help children start school ready to learn, perform at grade level, and graduate high school college- and career-ready. They are less likely to repeat a grade, be referred to special education, or engage in behavior that leads to incarceration. This investment in early learning will help support a strong future workforce and an engaged citizenry.

For information about supporting high-quality early learning programs, contact Cindy Cisneros, Vice President of Education Programs at CED - ccisneros@ced.org.

Additional information related to early learning is located at www.ced.org/earlylearning

QUALITY CHILD CARE MATTERS!

Building Brains Birth to Age 5 is Critical



The brain is built rapidly, laying the foundation for social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development

Investments in Quality Child Care Lead to



Lower costs
for elementary school remediation and grade retention



Increased
high school graduation rates, future wages and tax receipts