

The first five years of a child's life are crucial to their overall development, making this a critical point for strategic investments. Research shows that preschool is an effective early intervention method that creates lasting academic and social impact. Long-term studies of varying preschool programs have found significant benefits including:¹

- Higher levels of verbal mathematical, and intellectual achievement;
- Greater success at school, including less need for special education, less grade retention, and higher graduation rates;
- Lower unemployment and higher earnings;
- Better health outcomes;
- Less welfare dependency;
- Lower rates of crime; and
- Greater government revenues and lower government expenditures.

For Nevada's most at-risk students, high quality early childhood education can be the difference in entering kindergarten ready to learn or entering 18 months behind their affluent peers.² The benefits of preschool go beyond the classroom and into adulthood. The positive impact of preschool for an individual translates to a large return on investment (ROI) for society. Children who attend preschool are less likely to need costly services, such as an extra year of schooling, welfare assistance, or a jail bed. Additionally, children who attend preschool are more likely to be employed and have a higher salary - enabling them to contribute greater earnings to the community. Some communities have seen a ROI as high as \$7 for every dollar invested in Pre-K.³

Despite the proven benefits of investment into high quality early childhood education programs, Nevada has limited funds for the state preschool program. Even with the changes made to the funding formula in 2015, the Nevada Plan does not guarantee funding for early childhood education for non-special education students. The Nevada State Preschool Program is currently funded by external categorical dollars allowing it to be easily reduced or eliminated. The State has yet to increase funding for this external categorical program but has instead decreased funding. In 2001, the Nevada State Preschool Program was funded at 3.5 million dollars and

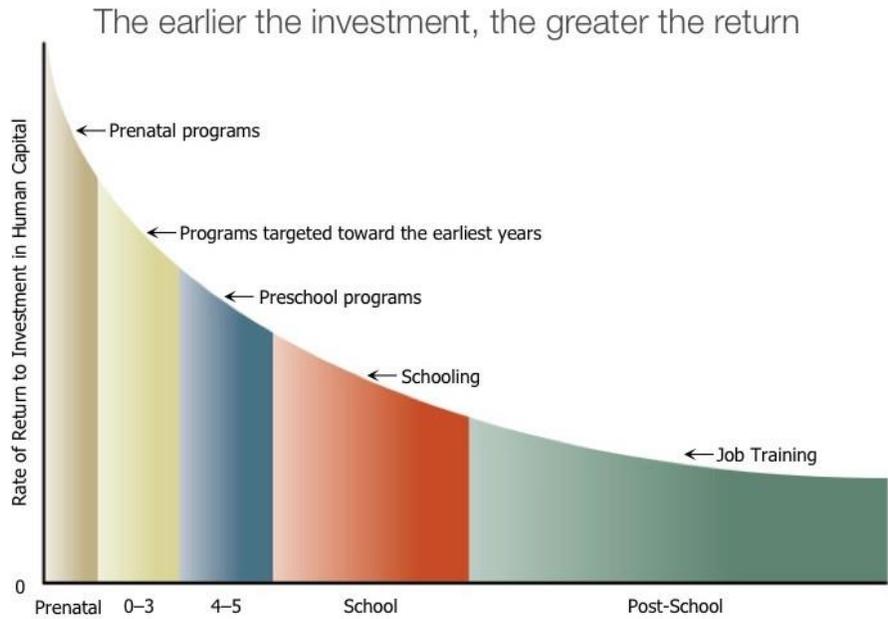
¹ Lynch, G. Roberts. 2004. "Exceptional Returns: Economic, Fiscal, and Social Benefits in Early Childhood Development." Economic Policy Institute

² <http://www.earlyedgecalifornia.org/our-issues/kindergartenreadiness/index.html>

³ Heckman, James, Seong Hyeok Moon, Rodrigo Pinto, Peter A. Savelyev, and Adam Yavitz. 2009. "The rate of return to the Highscope Perry Preschool Program." *Journal of Public Economics*, Vol. 94, pp. 114-128.

today it is funded at 3.3 million dollars. Currently, Nevada ranks 42nd for state spending per capita for states that offer preschool programs, investing \$46.35 per child compared to the national average of \$773.63.

Fortunately, the Nevada State Preschool Program has had indirect funding to help increase access for young children. During the 2015 Legislative Session, the legislature did increase funds to Zoom Schools, created the Victory Schools program and approved the match requirement for the Preschool Development Grant. While Nevada hasn't directly taken steps to increase state preschool funding, these investments will help to increase access to preschool programs, but are also not guaranteed from year to year. These categorical investments are steps in the right direction, but Nevada needs to start looking at long-term, sustainable funding for its preschool programs.



Source: James Heckman, Nobel Laureate in Economics

Recommendations:

In order to stabilize funding and increase access to the Nevada Preschool Program, the Children's Advocacy Alliance Recommends that the Nevada Plan be revised to include per pupil funding for preschool programs. In addition to funding for preschool students, Nevada need to insure they are also providing funds to create space for additionally classrooms.



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