



Pay Now or Pay Much More Later:

Law Enforcement Leaders support high-quality early education to cut crime and save money in California

California Spends 10 Times More on Corrections than on Early Education

FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS California is a nonpartisan anti-crime organization made up of more than 400 law enforcement leaders and crime survivors. These sheriffs, police chiefs, district attorneys and crime survivors promote greater public investments in programs proven to direct kids to a better path in life, leading them away from crime and towards success.

Summary

As California faces record fiscal pressures, our state’s law enforcement leaders have identified an area where the state government can achieve significant savings.

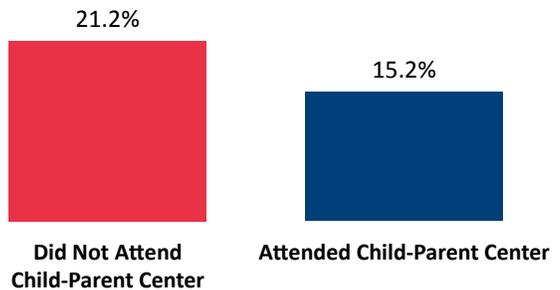
California is spending \$7.8 billion in 2011-2012 to house, feed and provide 24-hour supervision of criminals.¹ In contrast, California spent only a fraction as much—\$784 million—on early education programs.² Research shows that high-quality preschool programs can significantly reduce felony arrests and incarceration rates and return \$10 or more in savings for every dollar invested, with nearly half of the savings coming from lower prison and crime-related costs.³

Police chiefs, sheriffs, district attorneys and crime survivors across the state are saying “pay now or pay much more later”—pay now for early education or pay much more later for corrections. To realize these savings, state and federal

policy makers must move forward on providing more at-risk children with high-quality early care and education.

39% More Likely to Spend Time in Jail or Prison Between Ages 18 and 26

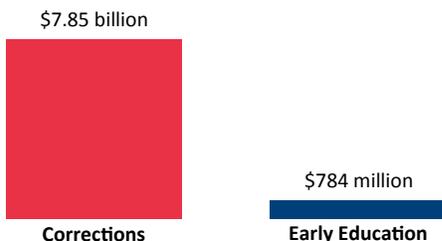
Any Incarceration or Jail History From Age 18-26



Source: Reynolds 2011

California Spends Ten Times More on Corrections than on Early Education

FY 2011-12 General Fund Spending



Sources: CA Dept of Finance; CA Dept of Education; Preschool California, 2012

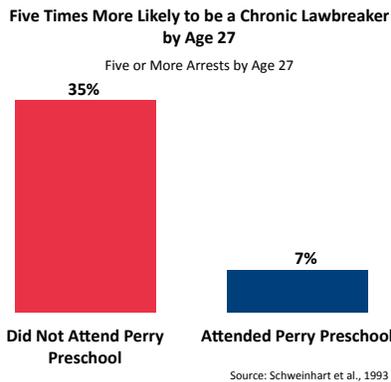
The Evidence on Early Education and Crime

New evidence published in the prestigious research journal *Science* provides further confirmation that high-quality early education can prevent crime and save taxpayers millions of dollars. The latest results from the two decade-long study of the high-quality Chicago Child-Parent Centers show that:

- By age 26, those *not* in high-quality early education were 27 percent more likely to have been arrested for a felony (25 percent vs. 19 percent).
- By age 26, those *not* in the program were 39 percent more likely to have spent time in jail or prison (21 percent vs. 15 percent).⁷

Early Education also Yields K-12 Education Savings

Research shows that making quality early education programs available to children can greatly reduce the need for special education—with reductions in special education costs ranging from 6 percent to as much as 48 percent, depending on the programs and the students.⁴ Approximately \$9 billion per year is spent on special education in California.⁵ Assuming special education savings of 10 percent from increased access to high-quality early education, \$900 million might be saved annually. Because high-quality early education can also reduce grade retention and improve the learning environment, the total K-12 education savings might reach \$1.8 billion a year.⁶



Similarly, the Perry Preschool Project has tracked disadvantaged Ypsilanti, Michigan kids who attended high-quality preschool and a randomized control group left out. Researchers have found that:

- At age 27, those who had *not* been in the project were already five times more likely to be chronic lawbreakers with five or more arrests (35 percent vs. 7 percent).
- By age 40, the *nonparticipants* were 86 percent more likely to have been sentenced to jail or prison (52 percent vs. 28 percent).⁸

school twice as much by second grade. In Michigan’s state program, those left out were held back 51 percent more often by eighth grade.¹⁰

- In Tennessee, Oklahoma, New Jersey, Arkansas, West Virginia and New Mexico, studies show clear gains in literacy among children who attended preschool programs.¹¹ For example, in Tennessee’s preschool program, participants gained an average of 82 percent more on early literacy and math skills than those not yet attending the program.¹²
- In Pennsylvania, the percentage of preschool kids with developmental delays dropped from 21 percent at the time of entry to 8 percent by the time the kids completed the program. The percentage of 3-year-old children with conduct or self-control problems dropped from 22 percent to 4 percent. Those reductions can dramatically cut the number of children needing expensive special education in Pennsylvania.¹³

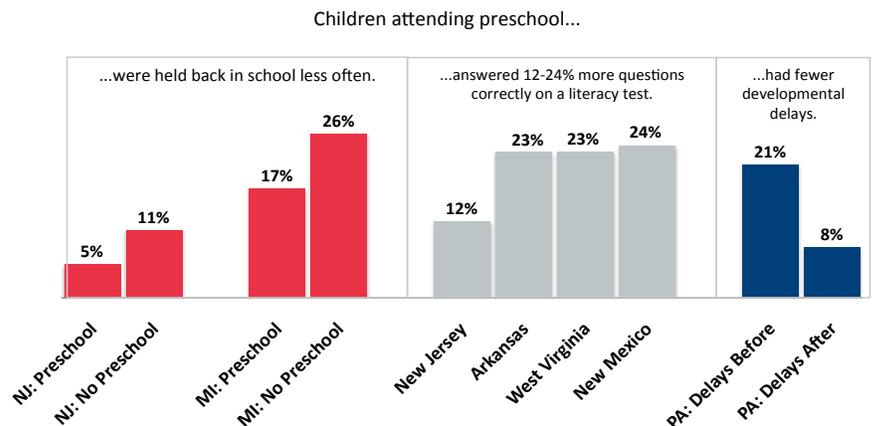
Together, the longer-term studies and recent state studies of high-quality programs provide solid evidence that preschool education is an effective way to get kids on the right path and to avoid costly problems later.

The Evidence from State Preschool Programs

While most large-scale state preschool programs have not been in existence long enough to have research on crime impacts, many quality services are already having an impact on education outcomes. Educational success is closely linked to later criminality. High school dropouts are eight times more likely to be in jail or prison than graduates.⁹ Preschool helps prepare children to succeed in school and later in life:

- Kids *left out* of New Jersey’s two-year preschool program were held back in

State Preschool Improves Educational Outcomes Nationwide



Sources: Frede 2009; Maloffeva 2007; Lamy 2005; Hustedt 2007; Hustedt 2009; Bagnato 2009

Savings

The societal savings resulting from high-quality early education can be astounding—the Perry Preschool Project returned an average of over \$200,000 per child and the Chicago Child-Parent Centers returned over \$80,000 per child.¹⁴ For the Perry Preschool Project, every dollar invested yielded \$16 in total returns, while for the Chicago Child-Parent Centers every dollar invested yielded \$10 in returns.¹⁵ That is, in large part, because the average cost of a young child who grows up to drop out of school, use drugs and become a career criminal is estimated at \$2.5 million.¹⁶

Quality Matters

Not all early care and education programs produce such strong cost-saving benefits and positive outcomes. They must be high-quality programs that feature good teachers, effective curricula, involvement by parents and coaching of parents, small classes, good teacher-student ratios and access to diagnosis and referrals for problems. In contrast, poor-quality child care or preschool lacking these features can actually result in negative outcomes for at-risk children.¹⁷

California's Public Early Education Programs

In 2011-2012, California's state-funded early education programs serve 148,000 children at a cost of \$784 million,

including \$767 million for half-day and full-day preschool and \$17 million for transitional kindergarten.¹⁸ This represents a decline from past years, due to \$70 million in preschool cuts enacted in 2011 that denied preschool to 17,000 children.¹⁹

The Governor's proposed 2012-2013 budget would cut preschool by an additional \$180 million, eliminating another 17,000 slots and potentially compromising program quality by reducing per student funding by 10 percent.²⁰ It also would repeal the requirement that schools provide transitional kindergarten programs to older 4-year-olds who miss the cutoff for kindergarten starting in 2012-2013, which could deny schools up to \$700 million in annual funding and deny 125,000 children the right to transitional kindergarten each year. Ongoing cuts make it harder for California's low-income families to access high-quality early education; even prior to the cuts enacted in 2011, it had been estimated that fewer than half of the low-income 3- and 4-year-olds eligible for publicly-funded preschool in California were able to attend, due to inadequate funding.²¹ Enacting these proposed cuts would slam the door to opportunity for tens of thousands of 3- and 4-year-olds. We would all pay for the consequences of this missed opportunity for years to come.

Preserve and Expand Early Education, Focus on Improving Quality

High-quality early education is a vital component in restoring California's fiscal integrity. Difficult decisions about spending must be made, but spending on early education is an

Corrections and Preschool Spending: National Trends

States spend over \$50 billion per year to house, feed and provide 24-hour supervision of criminals. In contrast, all 50 states spend only a fraction as much (\$5.5 billion) on preschool programs.²²

Corrections Facts:

- Total state spending on corrections exceeded \$50 billion in 2010, up from about \$19 billion in 1987 (adjusted for inflation).²³
- Fourteen states devote more than \$1 billion per year in general funds to their corrections system.²⁴
- Approximately 1 in every 15 dollars from state general funds was spent on corrections in 2007.²⁵

Preschool Facts:

- Total state preschool spending totals about \$5.5 billion per year.
- The following states do not currently support preschool programs: Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming.
- California spends more on corrections than all states combined spend on preschool.²⁶

Comparing Corrections and Preschool:

- States spend an average of 10 times more on corrections than preschool, although the ratio varies widely (3:1 to over 2,000:1).²⁷
- Many states with the highest quality preschool programs serving a large proportion of eligible children also have the lowest ratios of corrections to preschool costs, such as Oklahoma, New Jersey, West Virginia, Arkansas, Illinois and Georgia. But they still spend far more responding to crime than preventing it.

investment in the future and can help reduce future costs—in stark contrast to the too-often limited returns from back-end spending on corrections, probation and parole.

The law enforcement leaders and crime survivors of FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS call on policymakers to protect and strengthen early care and education in California. They know that high-quality early education is essential for growing strong, safe communities and saves far more than it costs.

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