

# ECDC Public Investment: Case for Support

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- The equation for a child's success is built on scientific research showing that a loving, nurturing family environment and everyday learning opportunities build the foundation for future learning and school success. You see it in your own children and grandchildren. Children need strong families, good early learning experiences -- especially in the early years -- and good health and supportive communities to succeed.
- Study after study shows that a child who comes to school with the social, emotional and cognitive skills needed for success is more likely to do well in school, graduate and go on to college – and is more likely to become the kind of worker that helps our community compete for the world-class jobs of tomorrow. Indiana ranks 39th in college attainment.
- Children from low-wage families are 1-2 years behind in language development. Preschoolers in high-income brackets score 60% higher in cognitive scores than those in the lowest brackets. This means the achievement gap starts before school does.
- Locally, data has shown that those children with free/reduced lunch status are less likely to be at benchmark literacy levels as they enter kindergarten than children who do not qualify for free/reduced lunch. The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment is being used to assess early literacy skills in the EVSC. In the fall of 2007, DIBELS assessment indicated that only 41.5% of kindergarten students entered EVSC schools at the benchmark level for early literacy skills.
- Many major economic and social problems such as crime, teenage pregnancy, dropping out of high school and adverse health conditions can be traced to low levels of skill and ability in the population.
- If a child is not motivated and stimulated to learn and engage early on in life, the more likely it is that when the child becomes an adult he or she will fail in social and economic life. The longer we wait to intervene in the life cycle of the child the more costly it is to remediate to restore the child to his or her full potential.
- The latest science shows it is relationships and everyday life that drive human development. Learning is always happening, wherever the child is: home, grandma's house, child care center, a neighborhood play group, a mother's Morning Out at a nearby church or at preschool. Our challenge is to do all we can to support the adults in these environments, and make sure children are safe, loved and have quality early education opportunities (wherever they are).
- Investing in early childhood education offers the best rates of economic and social returns – for children and for society. 85% of brain development occurs before age five; however, 95% of public investment in education traditionally occurs after age five.
- Building such an early childhood system requires new, and significant, public investments. Increasingly leaders outside the early childhood field are leading the charge, especially from the business community and those involved in economic research and analysis.

## ECDC Public Investment: Case for Support continued...

- The Committee for Economic Development (CED), made up of business and education leaders from around the country, has pressed for such investments, particularly for disadvantaged youth.
- Public-private-nonprofit partnerships are stepping up. Jim Renier, former CEO of Honeywell, has spearheaded, with financial support from Bank of America, the expansion of United Way of America's Success By 6 initiative around the country.
- The Federal Reserve Board Chair for Minnesota recently called for establishing \$1.5 billion endowment for early childhood services in that state. The chair concluded that, among all opportunities to invest in economic development, investing in early childhood would have the greatest overall returns.
- While the federal government funds basic human and social services, states foot the education bill individually. Local school districts and local government play a funding role as well. Business support over the last 20 years has helped improve K-12 public schools. But similar focus on early childhood education is relatively new – even though the cost benefits are clear.
- “Some of the areas of most rapid growth in state budgets – corrections and prison cost, special education ... and behavioral health services for children – are connected to failures in meeting children’s needs in the earliest years.” -Charles Bruner, Executive Director, Child and Family Policy Center
- Indiana is one of only twelve states that makes no investment in early childhood programming.