

EARLY LEARNING

A 2003 report from Art Rolnick of the Federal Reserve Bank changed the debate over the value of early childhood education. It estimates that dollars invested in high-quality preschool education for disadvantaged kids paid an inflation-adjusted 16 percent return.

WHERE WE STAND

While there is wide support for early learning and expanded preschool opportunities, Minnesota does not have a consensus on a statewide approach to deliver high quality preschool education to all young children. While Governor Dayton called for universal preschool (UPK) in 2015, the legislature added funding to existing programs serving low-income early learners and their families.

Minnesota is investing \$279 million in early learning in the '16-17 biennium and \$310 million in the '18-19 biennium with formula increases. Child Care Assistance invested \$216 million in FY'14 and is formula based. View distribution of the new funding by program at MnREA.org/EarlyLearningFunding

Minnesota's early learning programs and Universal Pre-K are built around these key goals:

- Direct school readiness skill development for children
- Parent education and involvement for the development and growth of children
- Parent involvement and commitment to their child's education through choosing programming for their child
- Parent ability to participate in the workforce and ensure quality childcare outside the home

MREA assembled a chart that overviews the six programs in Minnesota to inform community members and policy makers of the current state of early learning and child care support in Minnesota. View at MnREA.org/EarlyLearningPrograms



"KIDS WHO SHOW UP READY TO LEARN IN KINDERGARTEN DO BETTER ALL THROUGH SCHOOL AND BEYOND TO BECOME MORE PRODUCTIVE WORKERS WHO ARE LESS LIKELY TO BURDEN THE TAXPAYERS WITH COSTS OF CRIME AND WELFARE."
(MinnPost 4/16/12)

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Are the new levels of funding fully supporting the current high quality early learning provided by rural schools?
- Is there a minimum level of preschool education that all four year olds should have to ensure all students are ready for kindergarten?
- Should rural communities line-up in support of a school-based or school driven UPK system?
- If not universal preschool, then should rural communities be placed in the position of coordinating the many delivery systems and funding streams to ensure all at-risk students have access to high quality early learning?
- Should all early learning educators be required to be certified as highly qualified through systems such as teacher licensure, Parent Aware and NYAEC?

Learn more at MnREA.org/EarlyLearning