EARLY LEARNING INVESTMENTS

Are Essential to North Carolina's Future

Military, business and law enforcement leaders are calling for greater investments in young children to ensure our national security, build our economic well-being and reduce crime.

Essential to National Security

71% of Americans aged 17 to 24 cannot meet the military's eligibility requirements. In North Carolina it's 72%.

OVER **700,000** YOUNG NORTH CAROLINIANS ARE UNABLE TO JOIN THE MILITARY.

Essential to Economic Health

Nearly HALF the US workforce does not have the basic education and communication skills required to acquire and advance in jobs.

60% OF NC EMPLOYERS REPORTED COMMUNICATIONS SKILL GAPS AMONG JOB APPLICANTS.

Essential to Crime Reduction

At-risk children who didn't receive a high-quality early childhood education were 70% more likely to be arrested for a violent crime by age 18.

IN 2022 NORTH CAROLINA SPENT **$3.3 BILLION** ON THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE & PUBLIC SAFETY, AND ONLY **$230 MILLION** ON THE DIVISION OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT & EARLY EDUCATION.

WHY DOES EARLY LEARNING MATTER?

There are only **2,000 days** between birth and the beginning of Kindergarten. **Brain architecture is built** during this time.

Every experience a baby has forms a **neural connection** (synapse) in the brain. In their early years, **babies form one million synapses per second**.

Not all will last. **Connections that are used more are strengthened** and those that are not are pruned—forming either a strong or a weak **foundation for all future health and learning**.

The early years are so defining that by the time a child turns eight, their third grade outcomes can predict future academic achievement and career success.

Early child development investments produce results. Decades of research has identified programs proven to work for young children.

HIGHER READING & MATH SCORES
A 2017 Duke University study found that NC Pre-K raised children's math and reading test scores and reduced special education placement

HIGHER SALARIES
At-risk children who participated in a high quality early childhood program were more likely to be employed and earned 33% higher average salaries.

7-13% RETURN ON INVESTMENT
Every dollar invested in early childhood education produces a 7-13% annual return.

LESS CRIME
At-risk children who participated in a high quality early childhood program were significantly less likely to be arrested for a violent crime by age 18.

BETTER HEALTH
A study of children who participated in the Carolina Abecedarian early learning program found participants experienced fewer illnesses as adults, made healthier lifestyle choices, had lower rates of high blood pressure and had significantly lower risk of heart disease than the control group that did not participate.

HIGHER GRADUATION RATES
High quality early childhood programs increase graduation rates by as much as 44%.

GREATER SELF-SUFFICIENCY
Voluntary home visiting programs reduce health care costs, improve school readiness and success, reduce need for remedial education and increase family self-sufficiency. Participants in high quality early childhood programs pay more taxes and are less likely to rely on government assistance.

First 2000 DAYS™
Early Investment
A LIFETIME OF RESULTS

NC Early Childhood FOUNDATION
CONNECTING POLICY TO IMPACT

The First 2,000 Days is an initiative of the North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation.
www.buildthefoundation.org