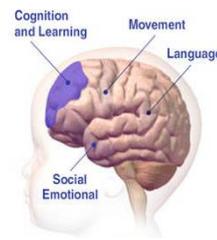


WHY IS EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION A PRIORITY?

90% of the foundational structures in the brain that support self-regulation and learning develop before Kindergarten². There is now incontrovertible scientific evidence of the significant developmental impact of early childhood experiences and caregiving relationships. School readiness and success throughout the lifespan are dependent upon the quality of early learning experiences^(2, 18). Research has demonstrated that children who attend high-quality childcare programs are proven more likely to enter school ready to learn, graduate from high school, attend college, earn more money as adults, and are less likely to engage in criminal activity or rely on social assistance programs as adults^(1, 9, 10, 11, 14, 16). The impact of preschool goes beyond a child’s academic achievement, and helps increase social and economic wellbeing. Human capital creates economic capital. The viability of our economy greatly depends on the skills and abilities of its workforce, and the development of Nevada’s workforce starts at birth!



90% of brain development occurs before age 5!

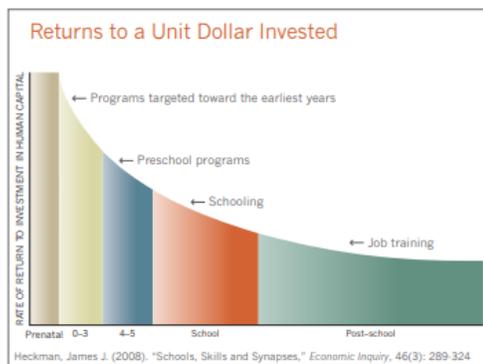
WHAT IS HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION?

Quality is generally separated into two dimensions with the cognitive and social benefits of high-quality child care experiences lasting well into the elementary years⁽⁷⁾. These high-quality building blocks should be the foundation of any early childhood education system.

<p>Process Quality: teacher-child interactions, engaging activities and materials, abundant learning opportunities, health and safety routines.</p>	<p>Structural Quality: group sizes, adult-child ratios, education and training of staff, program assessment.</p>
<p>When the activities and interactions are rated higher, using evidence-based assessments, children develop more advanced language and math abilities, as well as improved social skills. Conversely, poorer process quality has been linked to increased behavior problems.</p>	<p>Early childhood teachers who are more highly qualified and have smaller groups can more effectively provide individualized, responsive learning opportunities. In addition, higher teacher wages have consistently been linked to higher educational quality.</p>

Access to high-quality preschool reduces a child’s chance of being placed in special education, repeating a grade, and increases their chances of graduating high school and attending college⁽⁵⁾.

WHAT ARE THE COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES?



Attending a high-quality early childhood educational program can fulfill two important goals for our community. One, childcare provides a safe environment for children when parents have to work. Two, a high-quality program nurtures and develops children in ways that prepare them for school and beyond⁽¹⁷⁾. It is important that the benefits of quality early childhood programs not be limited to testing outcomes in 3rd Grade since the long-term holistic benefits span the lifetime. Dr. James J. Heckman, Professor of Economics at the University of Chicago and a Nobel Memorial Prize winner, is an expert in the economics of human development. He has conducted groundbreaking research showing that quality early childhood development impacts both outcomes for the individual and for the whole of society. More specifically, his efforts have demonstrated that the effects of high-quality early education programs yield a cost savings to society of up to \$7 for every \$1 invested⁽¹¹⁾. Investments made between birth and age five yield the highest return on investment.

NEVAEYC RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

NevAEYC implores our state leaders to make the necessary investments for our young children to become the educated, innovative, and productive citizens of our state’s future. NevAEYC has identified the following four imperatives needed to garner the expected results discussed above:

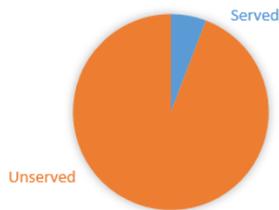
1. Increase Child Care and Development Fund Contribution
2. Use Current Market Rate to Set the State Subsidy Reimbursement Rate
3. Support Nevada’s Silver State Stars Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)
4. Increase Wages and Retention of the Early Childhood Workforce
5. Provide Sustainable Funding for Preschool Development Seats

IMPERATIVE IMPACTS ON NEVADA'S FAMILIES AND ECONOMY

IMPERATIVE 1 – INCREASE CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT FUND CONTRIBUTION

Families of all income levels, not just those in poverty, struggle with the cost of childcare. The average cost of care in licensed centers in Nevada ranges from \$11,137 for an infant to \$8,835 for preschoolers (age 3-5) ⁽³⁾. The Federal and State dollars that support the CCDF subsidy currently serve families in poverty or children in the foster care system. Today, a single parent making \$1,674.17 a month (100% of poverty) with an infant and preschooler would have to spend 95% of their income on center-based care ⁽⁸⁾. There are approximately 209,643 children under the age of 6 in Nevada, and 65.1% of households with children under the age of 6 have all parents in the workforce, making quality child care opportunities essential ⁽³⁾.

TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN ELIGIBLE FOR CHILD CARE SUBSIDY LIVING BELOW 200% OF POVERTY



Given that in 2016, 51% all Nevada's children under the age of 12 live below 200% of poverty AND 70% of Nevada's children have all available parents in the workforce, child care subsidies are critical in supporting their families' employment. **Nevada's subsidy program currently serves 5.84% of children in this eligible population ⁽⁵⁾. While this is an increase from 3.21% in 2015, the majority of eligible children remain unserved.**

The childcare subsidy program has both short- and long-term effects on the economy. Short term, subsidies contribute to the economy by enabling parents to go to work as well as supporting child care providers who use the subsidy money to operate their business and maintain their own employment. Using economic output linkages of the Early Care and Education (ECE) industry, the short-term outcome of this increase would generate an additional \$14.2 million in indirect effects (spending by the ECE industry) and \$19.7 million in induced effects (spending by the ECE workforce) for a total increased direct, indirect, and induced economic output of \$79.8 million for Nevada ⁽¹²⁾. Long term, subsidies provide equal access to quality childcare opportunities so children are prepared for school and life.

IMPERATIVE 2 – USE CURRENT MARKET RATE TO SET THE STATE SUBSIDY REIMBURSEMENT RATE

This year, Nevada's subsidy reimbursement rate was increased from the 2004 market rate to the 2015 market rate. This is a significant stride toward best supporting our families and early childhood education providers. For instance, based on the average annual cost of center-based care for a family with an infant and a preschool aged child (\$19,116), the previous average annual reimbursement amount in Nevada was \$14,105, a \$5,011 difference. For a single parent living at 100% of the poverty level, this was 25% of their annual income. Using the 2015 market rate, the annual reimbursement for the same family would be \$17,680 leaving a \$1,436 difference, approximately 7% of their annual income.

While this is a great step for our state, Nevada's parents on the subsidy program still have limited access to quality childcare and this gap will increase again if Nevada does not require that reimbursement rates are based on the most current market rates. Higher quality child care is more expensive on average which forces families on the subsidy program to use lower quality care which can impact safety and lessen opportunities for the optimal brain development that enables a child to enter school ready to learn.

Changes in the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (CCDBG) require states to use the current market rate to set state reimbursement rates and encourage states to reimburse at least at the 75th percentile to ensure equal access to high-quality care. The following table shows the daily increase in subsidy payments per child if market rates are updated to 75% of the current rate.

CHILD CARE CENTERS		Washoe	Clark	Car-Doug	Rural
Infants	Current Reimbursement Rate (2015)	\$41.00	\$42.00	\$35.00	\$30.00
	2018 75th Percentile Rate	\$46.20	\$52.00	\$35.50	\$32.30
	2018 / 2015 Rate Difference	-\$5.20	-\$10.00	-\$0.50	-\$2.30
Toddlers	Current Reimbursement Rate (2015)	\$37.50	\$38.00	\$32.00	\$29.00
	2018 75th Percentile Rate	\$43.00	\$48.00	\$34.95	\$31.33
	2018 / 2015 Rate Difference	-\$5.50	-\$10.00	-\$2.95	-\$2.33
Pre-K	Current Reimbursement Rate (2015)	\$32.00	\$36.00	\$27.00	\$29.00
	2018 75th Percentile Rate	\$38.00	\$42.35	\$30.38	\$30.53
	2018 / 2015 Rate Difference	-\$6.00	-\$6.35	-\$3.38	-\$1.53

Nevada must legislatively mandate resetting the subsidy rate at the 75th percentile rate based on the most current market rate within 24 months of the release of the most current market rate. This will ensure equal access to quality early childhood education programs and also allow parents to spend in other areas like food, utilities, clothing, and shelter, which would benefit the economy as a whole.

IMPERATIVE 3 –

SUPPORT NEVADA’S SILVER STATE STARS QUALITY RATING IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM (QRIS)

A QRIS is a systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education programs. These systems provide an opportunity for states to increase the quality of care for children, increase parents’ understanding of and demand for higher quality care, and increase professional development for childcare providers ⁽¹³⁾.

Star Level	Rating	Ctr.	Dist.	FCC	Total
★★★★★	Highest Quality	9	4	0	13
★★★★	Quality Plus	18	11	0	29
★★★	Quality	16	11	1	28
★★	Progressing Star	61	9	2	72
★	Rising Star	13	2	0	15
Initial Coaching	Not Yet Rated	59	35	9	103
Waiting List	Waiting for QRIS Coaching	29	0	0	29
Total	Total Participating	205	72	12	289

January 2019

Nevada’s Silver State Stars QRIS is a voluntary, statewide program available to all licensed child care centers, family home child care providers, school district preschools, and a tribal model for child care is currently in development. In October 2016, mandatory participation was phased in for programs serving families who receive childcare subsidies. The star rating (1-5, with five being the highest) is based on results from an onsite, evidence-based, quality assessment; director qualifications; classroom teacher-child ratios; and documentation in four quality categories: Policies & Procedures, Administration & Staff Development, Health & Safety, and Families & Community. Centers that achieve a 3, 4, or 5-star rating

will receive increased reimbursement for children on the subsidy program. Participating programs are eligible to receive 24 months of coaching focused on quality improvement and a grant for classroom materials. Star ratings are reassessed every 24 months. As of July 2018, 272 (only 28.1%) of 967 centers (425), school based (317), and family childcare programs (225) are participating in QRIS in Nevada.

IMPERATIVE 4 –

INCREASE WAGES AND RETENTION OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE

Competitive wages and compensation are necessary to recruit and retain professionals with the skills necessary to ensure our children are successful in school and life and that we follow through on the promise of high-quality early education. Without competent, trained early childhood professionals who can be retained in the ECE workforce, quality childcare cannot be achieved. In 2018, the average starting wage for a childcare teacher was \$10.90 per hour, and only 18% of licensed providers were receiving health insurance benefits.

Workforce The median wage of an early childhood teacher working in a licensed setting in Nevada is \$11.50 an hour—equivalent to a full-time wage of \$23,920 a year. This is \$11,003 less than Nevada’s median income for workers (\$34,923).

Currently, fees paid for by parents finance the majority of early childhood programs. Given the minimal assistance provided by Nevada’s childcare subsidy system, any increase in cost due to teacher wages would be dependent upon increasing parent fees. This limits childcare options, especially for the most at-risk families, as the decision will be driven by affordability and not quality.

Teacher retention is also a challenge as the turnover rate increased from 16% in 2014 to 23% in 2018 ⁽³⁾. Research illustrates that children benefit from being enrolled in centers with lower turnover, as stability increases positive interactions and relationships between the children and teacher ⁽⁶⁾.

The TEACH Early Childhood Nevada program provides scholarships for early childhood staff (working in a licensed facility at least 20 hours a week) to take classes towards an apprenticeship certificate, Associate’s, or Bachelor’s Degree in the early childhood field. However, for providers to attend school on top of their current job plus their family responsibilities is a huge undertaking. **They deserve a much-needed WAGES initiative in Nevada, which will provide an education-based supplement to providers working in licensed childcare programs.**



2019-2020 NEVAEYC POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPERATIVE 5 –

PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FUNDING FOR PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANT SEATS

One important component of the early childhood education system is Nevada’s State Preschool Program. The majority of funding for Nevada’s State preschool program relies on indirect funding to increase access. Categorical funding is a step in the right direction, but is easily reduced or eliminated during budget shortages. Nevada’s spending on State Preschool Program is funded below 2001 levels and is ranked 42nd in state spending per child compared to other states that offer pre-k¹⁹.

In 2014, Nevada received a four-year federal grant to expand the number of children participating in high-quality preschool programs. The Nevada Ready! Preschool Development Grant required a match from the state, which was approved by the legislature in June 2015. With these funds, Nevada added 3,000 new pre-k slots within school district programs increasing the number of high-quality opportunities for children. Nevada is now in the last year of the Nevada Ready! Grant and will not receive more federal money for the 2019-2020 school year. **Without legislative action to increase preschool funding by \$14,077,008 annually, we risk losing the seats we have gained¹⁹.**

This investment is critical to ensure Nevada does not slide backwards on the progress we have made to increase preschool access to children and families. While providing funds to address the Nevada Ready! Grant gap should be a critical priority, there are still more funds needed to build a robust preschool program for Nevada’s children. Additional recommendations to support this programming include: funding for infrastructure to increase classroom space, the expansion of the Silver Stars Quality Rating Improvement System, and high-quality professional development opportunities for early childhood educators. Nevada’s traditional public preschool program does not have the capacity to serve many more children and most rely on private childcare facilities. To build a universal preschool program in Nevada, the state needs to increase supports aimed at improving the quality of local childcare providers¹⁹.

“The argument [for quality early childhood education] is not just an appeal to the poor. We’re saving money for *everyone*, including the taxpaying middle-class and upper-class.”

-James Heckman

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Nevada Association for the
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NEVAEYC’s mission is to promote high-quality early learning for all children, birth through age 8, by connecting practice, policy, and research. We advance a diverse, dynamic early childhood profession and support all who care for, educate, and work on behalf of young children.

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