

# Early childhood education is good for everyone

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As a business professional for the past 28 years, lifelong resident of Westmoreland County, and member of Pennsylvania's Early Learning Investment Commission (ELIC), I write to stress the importance of supporting and investing in high-quality and evidence-based early childhood education.

ELIC is a group of 75 business leaders who know that effectively educating children from birth to age 5 is the key to growing a future talented workforce and thus a strong economy.

Since a top priority for the nation's education system has been to improve graduation rates at all levels — high school, trade school and university — to provide students with the capabilities and skill sets to continue America's leadership and prosperity, investing in high-quality early learning programs is a proactive way of achieving this goal.

To be a great nation, America must be a "grad" nation. We cannot be a "grad" nation unless more of our students arrive prepared and ready to learn, with a focus on diverse learning environments and social interaction that will develop skill sets to succeed in the competitive workforce and society.

Countless studies show that if we make more public and private investments in high-quality early learning, we would strengthen the workforce, the tax base and the economy, and reduce the need for special education, public assistance programs and prisons. Data even shows an increase in better health outcomes for adults who participated in quality early childhood programs.

Returns on investment in quality early learning range anywhere from \$7 to \$17 for every dollar invested. It simply makes economic sense to continue to develop our greatest resource: our children. Early childhood education will help to assure healthier people, businesses and communities for the future.

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