

Business Leaders Outline Critical Need For Early Childhood Education at CED Report Event in Detroit ^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

High-quality early education programs are vital to future economic growth and maintaining a highly skilled workforce. Support and investments at the national, state, and local levels for early education programs must continue to be a priority despite the downturn in the economy. CEOs and prominent business leaders must assume a more active role in advocating for early education programs.

Those are the main recommendations announced today in Detroit with the release of *Unfinished Business: Continued Investment in Child Care and Early Education is Critical to Business and America's Future*, a new report from the Committee of Economic Development (CED), a Washington D.C.-based, business-led national policy group.

CED President Charles Kolb joined James Rohr, PNC Financial Services Group, Inc., Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, and Carl Camden, Kelly Services Inc. president and CEO at an event to discuss "Unfinished Business" and the need for business leaders' engagement and commitment.

"Detroit is a city on the rise where many of our nation's top business leaders are positioning their companies for new growth," said CED President Charles Kolb. "In Detroit and across the state of Michigan, the next generation of workforce needs to be well-educated and poised to compete globally for jobs in their own state. Early childhood education is what will give them that competitive edge. It is essential to the prosperity and future of this state and the nation to have policymakers and business leaders engaged in this initiative and to put early childhood education on their agenda."

Key findings in "Unfinished Business" include:

- Global competition and a growing achievement gap have brought America to an economic and educational crossroads. As the need for unskilled labor falls, the demand for a more educationally prepared workforce rises.
- Investing in early learning and development is the best foundation for human capital. Learning is cumulative. Quality child care plus quality early learning sets students on the road to success as they progress through the grades.
- Child Care and early education play a critical role in our national economy. Local spending on the care and education of young children has been shown to strengthen families, communities, and economic development.
- Other countries are well ahead of the United States in early learning and development. The United States spends a smaller percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on the critical stages of early learning than other developed nations.

"As a nation, we have no greater moral imperative than to ensure that all of our children have access to quality early childhood education programming," said PNC's Rohr who is also a CED Trustee. "Children who arrive at school ready to learn are more likely to graduate high school, go on to college, secure sound employment, contribute to the economy, and help to stabilize families and their communities. We all have a stake in preparing our children for their future, and this report is less a collection of data and more a call to action for leaders from the public and private sectors to get involved and invested in that effort."

PNC is a private-sector leader in supporting early childhood education. It created PNC Grow Up Great, a bilingual, \$350 million, multi-year initiative designed to help prepare children - particularly underserved children - from birth to age five for success in school and life.

In its report, CED calls for a national strategy to ensure that all children have access to high-quality child care and early education from birth to third grade that promotes their learning and development while strengthening and engaging families in their children's education.

"Unfinished Business" challenges business leadership to do more towards ensuring opportunity for every child in America. For more than a decade, CED has engaged business leaders to work to expand quality early education in this country.

CEOs can, for example:

- Use their power and influence to keep early childhood at the forefront of all decisions at the community, state and national levels.
- Ask elected officials to support significant increased investment in early childhood.
- Voice support of early education with peers, at public events, and through the media.

- Invest at least 1 percent of corporate profits in public/private partnerships that support early childhood in your community or state.
- Make their company policies more family-friendly and educate employees about the importance of early childhood.

"Early education is the first building block of a good education. I believe that American companies and business leaders must step up and ensure that we continue to expand and improve early education programs. The CED report is a call to action for business leaders and a research-based blueprint for getting our children off on the right foot in their education," said CED President Charles Kolb.

Related link: [Unfinished Business: Continued Investment in Child Care and Early Education is Critical to Business and America's Future](#) [2]

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