

# Open the preschool door, close the preparation gap<sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Report in pdf<sup>[2]</sup>

### Excerpts from the report:

There is widespread recognition of the importance of early childhood learning, and a strong public appetite for increased public support to ensure that young children enter school ready to learn. National surveys find that 87 percent of voters think state governments should provide funding so that all children can enroll in preschool. Unfortunately, state budget constraints and disagreement about specifics have for too long meant that policy debates produce only incremental tinkering with existing programs or a default reliance on the status quo that leaves too many children unprepared.

Research shows that quality preschool improves children's life chances and benefits society by improving long-term education outcomes and earnings; reducing crime, teen pregnancy and welfare rates; and reducing the costs of special and remedial education. Through these benefits, high-quality preschool can actually save the public as much as \$7 for every \$1 spent. Further, in the global, knowledge-based, modern economy, it is increasingly critical that our schools equip all children with a higher level of skill than was required in the past. Americans are demanding more from our public schools through NCLB. Making sure children enter school with the preparation and skill to learn is an important step toward meeting this challenge. More fundamentally, our national commitment to equal opportunity and merit-based advancement is undermined when large educational achievement gaps exist even before children enter school. Government cannot fully level the playing field, but universal access to pre-kindergarten is a way to provide starting blocks to the most disadvantaged children so they can compete on an equal footing.

**Region:** United States<sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** quality<sup>[4]</sup>

pre-school<sup>[5]</sup>

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