

Investing in young children: A fact sheet on early care and education participation, access, and quality ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Full report in pdf ^[2]

Excerpts from news release:

Today, CLASP, together with the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP), released Investing in Young Children: A Fact Sheet on Early Care and Education Participation, Access, and Quality. The joint report reveals that significant underinvestment in early care and education programs at the state and federal levels has left large numbers of children underserved.

High-quality early care and education can play a critical role in promoting young children's early learning and success in life, while also supporting families' economic security. Young children at highest risk of educational failure - those experiencing poverty and related circumstances that may limit early learning experiences - benefit the most from high-quality early care and education programs.

Major findings in the report include:

- Family economic hardship is the predominant risk factor associated with academic failure and poor health. Nationally, 25 percent of children under six live in poverty. Other risk factors include having a teen parent, living in a household without English speakers, and having parents without a high school degree.
- Children are underserved by the three largest federal child care and early education programs: Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG); Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); and Head Start and Early Head Start. Funding for CCDBG has not kept pace with inflation and growing need. Since 2006, approximately 150,000 children have lost access to child care subsidies and an additional 30,000 will lose subsidies as a result of sequestration.
- Although funding for Head Start has increased by \$1.2 billion from 2006 to 2012, demand has exceeded its growth. Only 42 percent of eligible children are served by Head Start preschool and a mere 4 percent of children who are eligible are served by Early Head Start. As a result of sequestration, 57,000 children have lost or will lose access to Head Start services in 2013.
- For child care and early education to be effective, it must be high-quality. However, states are not meeting recommended benchmarks. Currently, only 4 states (CT, ND, OR, VT) meet benchmarks for both class size and adult-child ratios, while 33 states meet neither of these critical benchmarks.

A complex mix of federal and state investments and policies shapes low-income families' access to quality early care and education. Currently, these investments and policies are too weak to benefit large numbers of young children experiencing economic hardship and other circumstances that can pose serious risks to their healthy development and school success. Strong investments in early learning, such as those proposed in the Strong Start for America's Children Act that was introduced yesterday, can help connect vulnerable children and their families with home visiting services, high-quality child care, and preschool -- all of which counter negative risk factors and support healthy child development.

Region: United States ^[3]

Tags: subsidy ^[4]

quality ^[5]

funding ^[6]

accessibility ^[7]

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Links

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