

Ensuring Access to Quality Education

Background

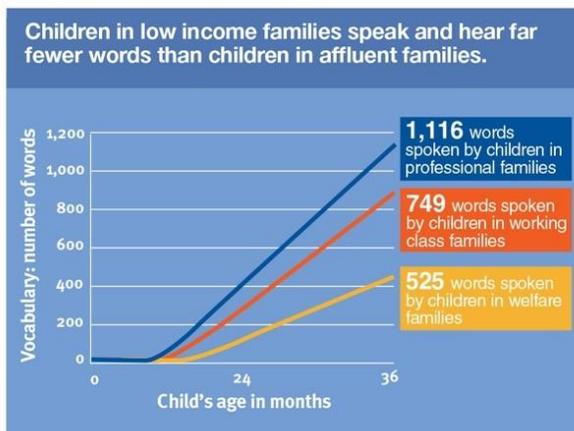
The foundation for communication, critical thinking, problem solving, and teamwork—skills that employers cite as critical to workplace success—is largely developed by age five. High quality early learning opportunities, as well as early detection and treatment of childhood developmental and behavioral challenges, are essential for children’s development and later success in school and life. \$1 invested in programs for low-income children can yield \$4-\$9 in returns to society.

Adults who received high quality early education as children are:



Source: Schweinhart, L.J., Montie, J., Xiang, Z., Barnett, W.S., Belfield, C.R., & Nores, M. (2005) Lifetime Effects: the HighScope Perry Preschool study through age 40. (Monographs of the HighScope Educational Research Foundation, 14). Ypsilanti, MI:HighScope Press.

THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP STARTS EARLY



Hart, B. & Risley, T.R. "The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3" (2003, spring)

Increase Per Pupil Funding

Support an increase in per-pupil funding through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), allowing Florida school districts to be competitive nationwide. These funds support basic K-12 programs, Exceptional Student Programs for handicapped and/or gifted students, bullying and suicide prevention, after school programs, class size reduction, transportation, classroom materials and supplies. Currently, the national average is approximately \$12,578, while in Florida the average is only \$7,408.

Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program (VPK)

Florida’s VPK is a free educational program that prepares 4-year-olds for kindergarten and beyond. Improving accountability through coordinated and developmentally appropriate assessments through kindergarten will improve quality and reduce the readiness gap.

After School Programs

Among Florida’s K-12 students, approximately 1,031,509 children are waiting for an available program. This leads to 541,481 students who are left alone and unsupervised after school. The need for after school programs far exceeds the available funding. The benefits of after school programs are widely shown to increase social skills, community engagement and learning.

Florida Needs More Afterschool

For every Florida student in afterschool, **2 more** would participate if a program were available.



ENROLLED:
627,430
STUDENTS






WAITING:
1 MILLION
STUDENTS

21st Century Community Learning Center grants are the only dedicated source of support for local communities’ afterschool and summer programs. Demand for programs is so great that **1 out of every 4** applications cannot be funded.

Afterschool Alliance April 2018

PROPOSED CHANGES

- **IMPROVE** VPK by implementing a coordinated child assessment system to better understand child development.
- **SUPPORT** an increase in per pupil funding through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), allowing Florida school districts to be competitive nationwide.
- **EXPAND** access to After School programs for at-risk children by increasing funding to the Department of Education.