

## Quality Pre-K Produces Short- and Long-Term Returns for Pennsylvanians of All Ages

### Pennsylvania Seniors4Kids Recommends:

- 1. RESTORE** Pre-K Counts to the FY 2009-2010 appropriation level of \$86.4 million to serve 11,800 children
- 2. RESTORE** Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program (HSSAP) to FY 2009-2010 level to serve 5,743 children



Photo: Donna M. Butts

### Introduction

As decades of rigorous research proves, investing in high-quality, voluntary pre-kindergarten nets short- and long-term returns for taxpayers. All Pennsylvanians reap rewards when children enter school ready to learn. Older adults care about pre-K and are raising their voices in support of policies that promote educational and lifelong success.

### Pennsylvania Families and Pre-K

As Pennsylvania faces a tough economy, even many middle class Pennsylvania families find themselves struggling to afford quality pre-K and early care. Fewer than 18% of Pennsylvania's three- and four-year olds attend high-quality, publicly-funded pre-K.<sup>1</sup> At the start of the 2009-2010 school year, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts sites reported waiting lists of more than 7,800 children.<sup>2</sup> Expanding access to high-quality pre-K programs is critical for Pennsylvania families and their communities. State legislators can address the immediate needs of families

and produce strong returns for the public by increasing access to pre-K. A Cornell University study finds that "increased direct spending on early childhood education programs generates more employment and total sales than spending increases in any other major sector in Pennsylvania," ranking the Commonwealth highest among states in terms of positive economic impact of public investments in early childhood education.<sup>3</sup> For every dollar spent through Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts and HSSAP, \$2.17 is circulated into the economy.<sup>4</sup> In the short-term, investments in pre-K and other early childhood programs, employ people, encourage the purchase of goods and services, and keep people in their jobs.

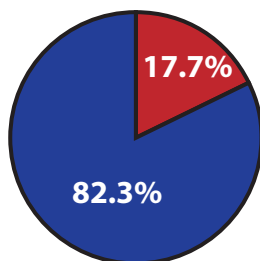
### Intergenerational Benefits: Successful Students, Responsible Adults, Strong Communities

As the state faces difficult economic choices, Pennsylvania should invest in programs that increase productivity, attract business, and support families. Few public policy options offer returns as tangible as quality, voluntary pre-K. Nearly 75 percent of children who attended PA Pre-K Counts in 2008-2009 finished the school year with age-appropriate proficiency in literacy, numeracy, and social skills.<sup>5</sup>

Long-term intergenerational benefits of early childhood education that can save taxpayers up to \$7 for every dollar invested include:

- Greater academic motivation, on-task behavior, capacity for independent work, and time spent on homework

Three- and Four-Year Old Population, 2008

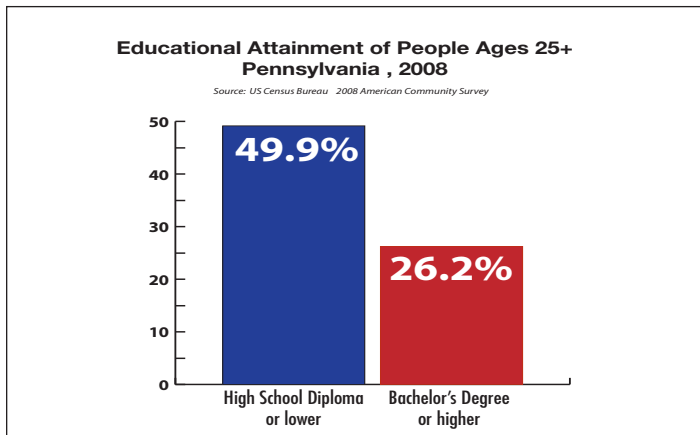


■ Access to Pennsylvania Public Pre-K

Source: Source: Tabulated from Federal Office of Head Start, and State Departments of Education and Public Welfare, Office of Child Development and Learning by Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children

- Fewer referrals for remedial classes or special education
- Lower rates of teen pregnancy
- Higher high-school graduation rates, GED completion, and post-secondary enrollment
- Better earnings and employment rates contributing to fiscal balance<sup>6</sup>

Strong results like these can help ensure Pennsylvania's future economic competitiveness. Many of the less-skilled jobs that went away in the recession are unlikely to return. High-quality pre-K can position Pennsylvania to build the workforce it needs to put the state back on the path for growth.



Source: Tabulated from U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 American Community Survey Microdata Sample

## Older Adults Care About Pre-K

*“As a clinical supervisor who works to combat drug addiction and gang involvement among youth, I know that cuts to early education provide false savings. When children start school ready to learn, they are more likely to become responsible, tax-paying citizens who benefit all of us.”*

—Bernard Bruno, Philadelphia Captain4Kids volunteer

The number of adults age 50+ in Pennsylvania is on the rise and they represent a growing and diverse voter constituency across the state. While recognizing the complexity of choosing between priorities when balancing budgets, many seniors understand and embrace the value of quality early learning for all children.

Older adult volunteers, called Pennsylvania Captains4Kids, are adding their voices to ensure a strong start to an education that will benefit all generations as part of Generations United's Seniors4Kids initiative. “As a grandparent, I think children need older adult voices to help them thrive. But I also recognize that quality pre-k benefits people of all ages and has a positive impact on issues that matter to me: the economy, crime, national security, and revenue generation,” says Captain4Kids Bruce Haselrig of Johnstown. With their support for expanding access to early education programs, older adults hope to position children-and Pennsylvania- for greater success.

## Our Mission

Generations United's Seniors4Kids ([www.seniors4kids.org](http://www.seniors4kids.org)) is a civic engagement initiative that highlights the role older adults play in support of issues that directly benefit children and youth. Currently, the program helps adults age 50+ in Pennsylvania to create statewide networks of community leaders and grassroots volunteers that work to increase access to, and improve the quality of, pre-kindergarten programs.

For more information, please contact:

**Yvonne Thompson-Friend,**  
**State Coordinator, Pennsylvania Seniors4Kids**  
**215-844-4744 or YTFriend53@yahoo.com**

Generations United (GU) is the national membership organization focused solely on improving the lives of children, youth, and older people through intergenerational strategies, programs, and public policies. GU represents more than 100 national, state, and local organizations and individuals representing more than 70 million Americans. Since 1986, GU has served as a resource for educating policymakers and the public about the economic, social, and personal imperatives of intergenerational cooperation. GU acts as a catalyst for stimulating collaboration between aging, children, and youth organizations providing a forum to explore areas of common ground while celebrating the richness of each generation.

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For further information on intergenerational programs and policies please contact:

**Generations United**  
 1331 H Street, NW, Suite 900  
 Washington, DC 20005  
 Phone: (202) 289-3979, Fax (202) 289-3952  
[www.gu.org](http://www.gu.org)

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<sup>1</sup> Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, “Table: Total Funded Pre-k 2009,” School Readiness in Pennsylvania, [http://www.papartnerships.org/reports/sr2009/tables/PPC\\_Pre-K\\_09.pdf](http://www.papartnerships.org/reports/sr2009/tables/PPC_Pre-K_09.pdf) (Accessed April 21, 2010)

<sup>2</sup> Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, School Readiness in Pennsylvania, 2009 [http://www.papartnerships.org/early\\_childhood\\_reports\\_sr2009.shtml](http://www.papartnerships.org/early_childhood_reports_sr2009.shtml) (Accessed April 21, 2010)

<sup>3</sup> Liu Zhilin et al, “Comparing Child Care Multipliers in the Regional Economy: Analysis from 50 States,” 2004 <http://government.cce.cornell.edu/doc/reports/childcare/reports.asp> (Accessed April 21, 2010)

<sup>4</sup> Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality, “Pennsylvania's Early Childhood Education Investment Stimulating Our Economy Today,” [http://www.pakeys.org/docs/ECE\\_Multipliers\\_final\\_2\\_19.pdf](http://www.pakeys.org/docs/ECE_Multipliers_final_2_19.pdf) (Accessed April 21, 2010)

<sup>5</sup> Office of Child Development and Learning, “Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts: End of Year Report,” 2009

<sup>6</sup> Pre-K Now, “The Benefits of High-Quality Pre-K,” <http://www.preknow.org/policy/factsheets/benefits.cfm> (Accessed April 21, 2010)