

INVESTING IN CHILDREN

AN EARLY LEARNING STRATEGY
FOR WASHINGTON STATE



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“ONCE BILL AND I HAD OUR OWN CHILDREN, WE REALIZED THERE ARE OPPORTUNITIES THAT ALL CHILDREN IN THE NORTHWEST SHOULD HAVE—AND REALLY THAT ALL CHILDREN ACROSS THE GLOBE SHOULD HAVE.” —MELINDA FRENCH GATES

In Washington state, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has two primary grant-making priorities to help ensure that every young person in the state has the opportunity to be successful in school and life.

Through our U.S. Education program, the foundation has invested in Washington state to prepare all students for college, work, and citizenship through grants to individual high schools, school districts, and intermediaries.

Through our Pacific Northwest program, the foundation works to improve the lives of at-risk families and children. In addition to investing in supportive housing to help homeless families become self-sufficient and in community grants to augment human services for low-income families, the foundation is embarking on a new early learning strategy for the state of Washington. Our goal is to ensure that all children have the opportunity to become successful young adults.

This paper describes the foundation's new early learning strategy, which was approved in 2005. It begins with identifying the problems faced by many youth in Washington state and summarizes a strategy for public and private funders to make a significant, measurable improvement in school-readiness and long-term outcomes for all children.

The Problem

Research shows what concerned parents, educators, and social workers know from daily firsthand experience: Many children begin life with measurable indicators of socio-economic disadvantage, or “risk factors,” that are often overwhelming. In Washington state, 23 percent of all children age 0–5—more than 109,000 statewide—are born with two or more of these risk factors, poverty being the most prevalent. Without successful interventions involving parents and caregivers, many of these children, by kindergarten, are in danger of falling behind other children in their social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. The farther behind children are when entering kindergarten, the more difficult it will be for them to catch up, and the lower the likelihood that they will grow up to be successful young adults.¹ The result is an enormous loss of human potential and a high cost to taxpayers. (See Appendix A for how we define risk factors and successful young adulthood.)

The Solution

Today we know more than ever about how much the first five years shape a child’s life. Economic, education, public health, and neuroscience research clearly point to the need for increased public investment in quality early learning for children as an effective approach to prevent serious negative outcomes such as homelessness, poverty, and incarceration. Likewise early learning leads to positive benefits earlier in life, including higher education levels and academic achievement. As a state, however, Washington has failed to invest adequately in our children’s earliest years. Supporting the critical components of quality early learning, including high standards and support for parents and childcare and pre-kindergarten programs, offers the greatest potential to ensure that all Washington’s children have the opportunity to be successful throughout their school years and beyond.

Our Strategy

Our mission is to work with others to ensure that every child in Washington state has the opportunity, from birth, to be successful in school and in life. While high-quality early learning is critical to all children, our investment strategy is to focus on children who have multiple risk factors that can jeopardize school-readiness and to reach them where they spend the majority of their day—either at home with a parent or guardian or in a licensed childcare facility. Using this existing infrastructure, we will help create a variety of high-quality early learning environments by providing support to parents and by transforming childcare from the current average low-quality custodial care to effective centers that will help parents prepare children socially, emotionally, and cognitively by age 5 to succeed in school and life. Over the next 10 years, through our statewide grantmaking, demonstration communities, and promising models, we will work in partnership with other public and private entities to help all families in Washington state gain access to affordable, quality early learning for their children. We will begin by concentrating investments and demonstrating the effectiveness of quality early learning in two geographically and demographically diverse communities. We also will work to leverage these investments statewide by working with public and private partners across Washington.

The Impact

We have designed our early learning strategy to make a real difference in the lives of children, their families, and Washington communities over the next decade. We will evaluate our effort by measuring results on two fronts:

- *Significantly increase the school-readiness rate among all children entering kindergarten in the two demonstration communities.*
- *Statewide, reduce the gap between low-income and high-income children’s rate of school-readiness.*

Neither our present educational system nor our current public funding in Washington state is designed to support the fact that children’s success in school and life is significantly determined before they ever enter kindergarten. By the time most funding and programs kick in to help children, many children are already behind socially, emotionally, and cognitively, and likely will never catch up.

PART 1: THE PROBLEM

Washington state has long been among the nation’s bellwether education states, often leading the way on policies that advance all of its citizens. However, Washington state is not among the nation’s leaders in providing early learning that prepares children for successful young adulthood.

In analyzing why Washington state has fallen behind in outcomes for children, we looked across a number of key factors that indicate how children are faring. Sadly, Washington children trail the nation in many critical factors. As the chart below shows, we have fallen even further behind

other perennial bellwether states such as Minnesota, with its similar population size, racial mix, and demographics. In Washington, the infant-mortality rate continues to rise. More than one in four children (28 percent) live in families in which no parent has full-time, year-round work. More than one third of children from birth to age 5 live in or near poverty. The percentage of teens not attending school or working is on the rise. The juvenile-arrest rate is more than 50 percent higher than the national average. Just 72 percent of our children graduate from high school, and only 35 percent are ready to succeed in college.² (See Appendix B for a demographic snapshot of Washington state’s children and youth population.)

Who’s at risk—and why.

Although navigating a certain amount of adversity is part of growing up, many children live with serious multiple risk factors, or measurable indicators of socioeconomic disadvantage, that affect their ability to succeed in school. A wealth of research shows a direct correlation between a child’s odds for early success and whether or not they have such risk factors in their lives. In our study of Washington state, we used the following risk factors: poverty (the most prevalent); single or no parent; no parent employed full time/full year; all parents with disability; mother does not

have high school degree; no parent fluent in English. There are certainly many other factors, but these are the most widely cited and statistically valid.

Research tells us that children with only one of these risk factors typically have the resiliency to succeed. Two or more risk factors, on the other hand, markedly impede a child’s chances for success, and can lead to negative outcomes such as homelessness, poverty, and incarceration later in life. According to researchers, children with two or more of these risk factors have a far greater chance of failure throughout their school years and beyond.³

Prevalent conditions in families with two or more risk factors.

Children in families with two or more risk factors are more likely to experience the following problems:

- Family-related conditions, including:
 - Abusive or neglectful (stressful) family environment
 - Poor or no parent-child bonding (from 0–5 years, a child’s low attachment to the primary caregiver can be linked to later problems, including teen pregnancy, criminal behavior, and drug abuse)

FIGURE 1

YOUTH PROBLEMS IN WASHINGTON STATE

How Washington Compares to Minnesota*, U.S.

| | WA | MN | US |
|---|------|------|------|
| Children in families with no parent with full-time, year-round work | 28% | 16% | 23% |
| Children 0–5 in poverty | 16% | 9% | 19% |
| Families with children headed by a single parent | 30% | 21% | 28% |
| Teens not working and not attending high school (“disengaged”) | 8% | 4% | 8% |
| High school graduation rate | 72% | 84% | 71% |
| College readiness rate | 35% | 33% | 34% |
| Juvenile arrest rate | 1.9% | 1.8% | 1.2% |
| Teens (12–17) who frequently binge drink | 11% | 13% | 11% |
| Young adults who frequently binge drink | 41% | 50% | 41% |
| Teens (12–17) who’ve recently used illicit drugs | 14% | 12% | 11% |
| Young adults suffering from serious mental illness | 15% | 13% | 14% |
| Birth rate for 15–17 year olds | 1.9% | 1.8% | 2.3% |

* We chose Minnesota for comparison because it has a population size and racial and geographic demographics similar to Washington.

Source: *Child Facts: Washington’s Children*; Greene, *Public High School Graduations*; *Indicator Website*; *Kids Count*; *Minnesota Kids*; *SchoolMatters*; *State of Washington’s Children*; US DHHS, *State Estimates*; Washington DSHS, *Economic Costs*.

- Low caregiver knowledge of child cognitive, emotional, and social development
- Poor mental health of parent or caregiver
- Delayed language development
- Societal conditions, including:
 - Low-quality, out-of-home childcare
 - Stressful neighborhood living conditions
 - Bad schools
 - Poverty and under- or unemployed parents
 - Socially isolated parents
- Health and nutritional deficits and disabilities

How many children are at risk in Washington state?

Overall, 23 percent of all children age 0–5 have two or more risk factors—a total of 109,725 children statewide. The percentages differ dramatically with race and ethnicity. While 16 percent of white children are at risk, the percentages rise to 42 percent of African-American children, 45 percent of Hispanic children, and 49 percent of Native Americans. Obviously, this population is dynamic, as new children both enter and move beyond this 0–5 age group each year. That is, as new children become part of this “at risk” population each year, others enter the school system without the preparation they deserve. See Figure 2.⁴

How children fail before they start.

It is troubling that nearly one in four children begin life with these disadvantages. But even more disturbing is the long-term impact: Children who are behind when they start school will likely never catch up academically.⁵

Fully 75 percent of the children in Washington’s lowest-income classrooms are not school-ready, according to an assessment of kindergarten-readiness rates conducted by the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and Washington State University.

One survey shows that, across the state, all classrooms are not created equal when it comes to school-readiness: High-income classrooms are rated more than twice as school-ready as low-income classrooms. (Students were assessed by their own teachers based on a composite measure of five school-readiness factors: cognitive; language and vocabulary; social-emotional; health and motor skills; and approach to learning.) See Figure 3.⁶

The ability of children to be successful at school and life begins early—before they ever enter the school system. Many enter school with sizable delays in cognitive, social, physical, or emotional development and may be years behind their classmates when they enter kindergarten. Even if they make considerable gains throughout their school years, some will remain well below grade level every step of the way. In this sense, these children are falling behind and failing before they ever enter school.

FIGURE 2

HOW MANY CHILDREN ARE “AT-RISK” IN WASHINGTON STATE?

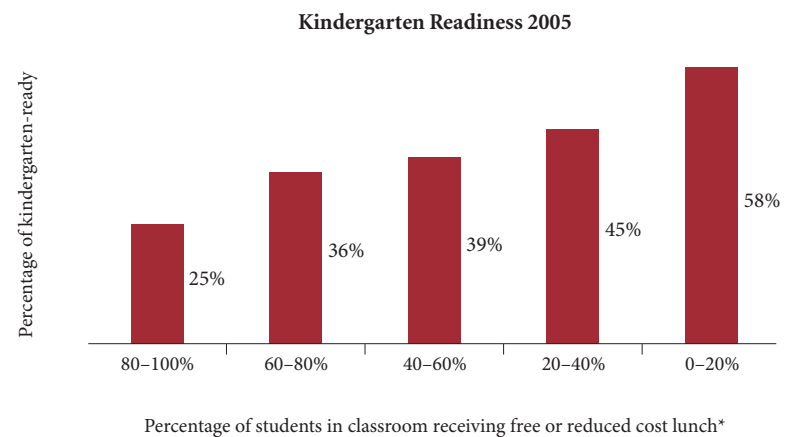
Children Age 0–5 with 2+ Risk Factors

| | Total number in group | Children with 2+ risk factors | Percentage of group with 2+ risk factors |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| All races/ethnicities | 476,648 | 109,725 | 23% |
| White | 323,993 | 52,954 | 16% |
| Hispanic | 70,205 | 31,593 | 45% |
| Native American | 7,303 | 3,592 | 49% |
| African-American | 17,181 | 7,288 | 42% |
| Asian | 25,325 | 5,102 | 20% |
| Other/multiracial | 32,641 | 9,196 | 28% |

Source: University of Washington Human Services Policy Center.

FIGURE 3

CORRELATION BETWEEN HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND SCHOOL-READINESS



*Free and reduced lunch is a measurement of poverty equal to 185 percent of the federal poverty level. A neighborhood where 80 to 100 percent of the children receive free or reduced lunches is an extremely poor neighborhood.

Source: Washington State University, Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

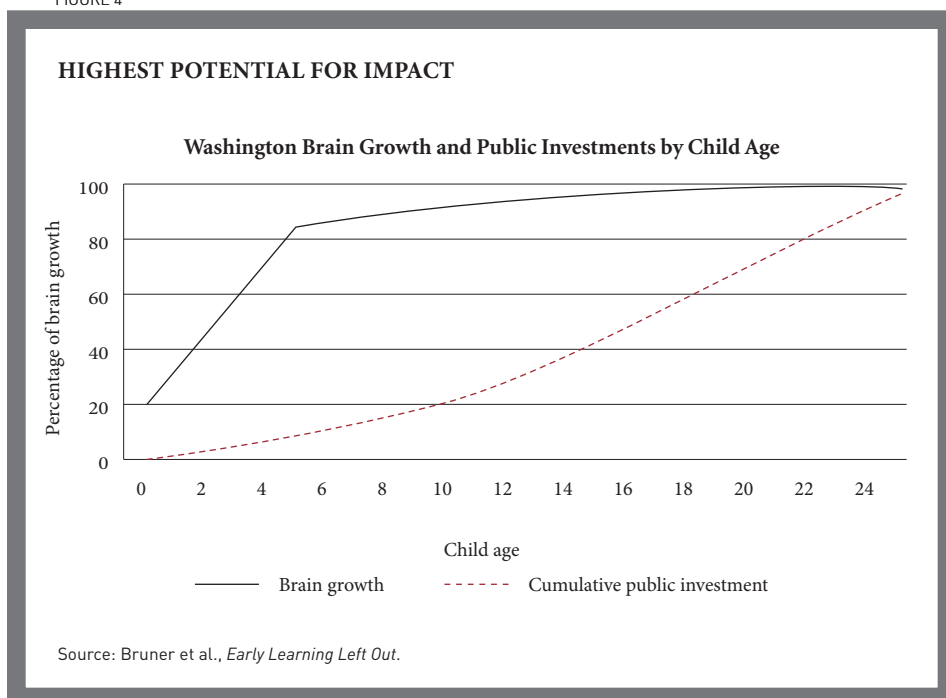
What contributes to the lack of school-readiness?

Over the last few decades, a confluence of socio-economic changes has dramatically changed how we care for children and increased the need for quality early learning in Washington state. Due to the changing role of women, welfare reform, and increases in single-parent families, young children are increasingly cared for outside of the home.

- In 1975, 34 percent of mothers with children age 0–3 were in the workforce. In 1996, welfare reform began to bring many mothers into the workforce and, by 2000, 61 percent of mothers with children 0–3 were working.⁷
- The number of low-income children in subsidized childcare in Washington has more than doubled from 15 percent in 1990 to 34 percent in 2002.⁸

Working parents want the best environment for their children. Yet as the need for quality early learning grows, the funding to pay for it is unavailable; parents can't afford it, and state subsidies don't cover the cost of quality. At a time when young children are increasingly receiving little more than custodial care, neuroscience is shedding new light on how critical the first three years of life are to success in learning. While 85 percent of a child's core brain is formed by age 3, less than 4 percent of public investments in education have occurred by that time. See Figure 4 below.⁹

FIGURE 4



With more children in the care of others, the need for quality early learning environments is crucial. Research consistently shows that poor cognitive, social, and emotional development in early childhood has a long-term impact and is tied to problems later in life:

- Brain development is most intense from birth to 3 years of age. The number of synaptic connections in the brain peaks at age 3. Synapses that get used stay in the brain; if synapses are unused, they begin to be eliminated by late childhood.¹⁰
- Poverty in early childhood is correlated with lower cognitive scores and lower school achievement.¹¹
- Children learn social and emotional skills early in life. These skills dramatically influence academic achievement later in life—more so than cognitive ability.¹²
- Children who grow up in abusive, neglectful, and dysfunctional families experience four to 10 times more alcoholism, substance abuse, depression, and suicide as adults. There is a dose-response relationship; that is, the more adverse early experiences, the more negative later outcomes.¹³
- Approximately one-third of abused and neglected children will eventually victimize their own children.¹⁴

At a time when growing numbers of young children are receiving little more than custodial care, neuroscience is shedding new light on how critical the first three years of life are to success in learning and life.

The consequences—and the costs.

As young adults, many at-risk youth experience one or more of the following problems: substance and alcohol abuse, criminal activity, educational failure, no workforce involvement, poor mental health, antisocial behavior, homelessness, and early pregnancy.

The cost—to these young people, and to society—is enormous:

- 88,000 youth (age 18–24) in Washington state are not employed and not in school.¹⁵
- 12,000 young adults in Washington (age 18–24) receive welfare, representing \$60 million per year in support.¹⁶
- Nationwide, multiproblem youth (those involved in more than one self-destructive behavior) represent less than 20 percent of the population, but they account for 88 percent of arrests associated with violence, 72 percent of total arrests, 87 percent of health problems associated with drug use, and 79 percent of problems associated with alcohol.¹⁷
- Nationwide, multiproblem youth cost society an estimated \$335 billion to \$350 billion annually, and 63,000 to 65,000 lives are lost each year as a result of multiproblem behaviors.¹⁸

Leveraging what we've learned from 10 years of Pacific Northwest giving.

As we have studied these problems and examined solutions and strategies for addressing them, the foundation has drawn on our decade of working with public and private partners to help families and children succeed in the Pacific Northwest. We have documented the approaches that have made the most measurable difference. Going forward, our early learning strategy will be informed by what we've learned.

- One of the most frequently needed services for families transitioning out of homelessness is quality childcare (Sound Families evaluation).
- Children from low-income families may benefit more from high-quality care and be more negatively affected by poor-quality care than are higher-income children (UW Human Services Policy Center, Martin Luther King Jr. Day Home Center).
- Children who are exposed at a young age to reading and language development vastly increase their social and mental development, have higher self-esteem, perform better in schools, have decreased incidence of early pregnancy, and use less alcohol and fewer drugs (Page Ahead Children's Literacy Program, Hearing Speech and Deafness Center).
- Many low-income children enter adolescence with few developmental assets. The programs that are most successful at helping adolescents to recover assets are much more intensive and expensive than prevention programs (YMCA of Greater Seattle, Campfire USA of Portland, Boys & Girls Clubs, Catholic Community Services, Friends of Youth, Friends of the Children).
- Family support centers can be very effective in preventing child abuse and fostering positive parent-child relationships by offering parenting classes and respite care (Children's Services of So-Valley, Safe Harbor Crisis Nursery).
- Physical space for social services is often poor, which affects both the program quality and the clients' self-esteem. Providing appropriate space can greatly improve outcomes (Martin Luther King Jr. Day Home Center, First Place, and Hopelink).
- A well-trained and highly committed staff that is adequately compensated and retained over time is integral to program success across a wide variety of youth and family service providers (Community Access to Technology program evaluation).

PART 2: THE SOLUTION

During the foundation's study of at-risk children, we did not immediately arrive at quality early learning as a long-term giving strategy. We began by examining a wide range of approaches to improving outcomes for Washington youth.

We considered a number of major preventive approaches: quality early learning; out-of-school activities for adolescents; quality health care; economic development; and family support services. We also assessed ways to intervene later in life to solve problems that often result from lack of school-readiness. These intervention approaches included workforce training; foster care; and interventions to reduce juvenile crime, homelessness, and substance abuse.

We then assessed how well each approach measured in light of several foundation and Pacific Northwest program criteria.

Criteria that helped guide our decision to invest in early learning.

On five critical tests, quality early learning was the right fit for us.

1. Alignment with foundation principles. The foundation believes that philanthropy plays an important but limited role. We are funders and shapers; we rely on others to act and implement. Our focus clearly prioritizes some of the most neglected issues, where programmatic focus and vigorous advocacy can promote greater equity. We identify a specific point of intervention and apply our efforts against a theory of change. In addition, we believe in preventing problems, rather than intervening later when they've become more difficult and expensive to solve.

Quality early learning works early in the problem cycle to deter the need for later, more intensive intervention. It uses a targeted approach, focusing on a single solution with the greatest potential to benefit the greatest number of children. Quality early learning also supports and builds the base for the foundation's existing investments in K-12 education by preparing children before they enter the system for success in school and life.

2. Successful research-based models exist.

A growing body of evidence demonstrates that the cumulative developmental toll experienced by high-risk children can

be prevented or significantly reduced by providing high-quality early learning from birth to the start of kindergarten.¹⁹

Numerous landmark research efforts demonstrate the longitudinal impact of high-quality early learning, including three of the most important and long-term studies: 1) High Scope/Perry Preschool in Michigan; 2) Abecedarian Project in North Carolina; and 3) Chicago Parent-Child Centers in Illinois. (Our statistics are based on the longitudinal studies in early learning from Perry Preschool and Abecedarian.) Proven home-based, parent-support models such as the David Olds' Nurse-Family Partnership and other models rooted in attachment theory demonstrate that working directly with parents can dramatically improve outcomes for children. Together, these and other studies have helped mobilize a nationwide movement in early learning. See Figure 5 on next page.²⁰

The results: clear, consistent, and long-term benefits. The High/Scope Perry Preschool is a 40-year study of 123 low-income African-American children who were assessed to be at high risk of school failure. Fifty-eight of the children were assigned to a group that received a high-quality preschool program at ages 3 and 4; the other 65 children received no preschool program. Forty years later, the differences in education, crime, and income levels clearly demonstrate the positive impact of early intervention. (See Appendix C.) The group that received high-quality early learning had higher IQs at age 5, higher high-school graduation rates, fewer arrests, and higher median annual incomes than those who received no preschool.

In the 40-year Abecedarian study, 57 infants from low-income families received high-quality childcare from birth to age 5. These participants were twice as likely to still be in school at age 21 as the control group. They were also, on average, two years older when their first child was born, and nearly three times as likely to attend a four-year college.

A significant return on each dollar invested. The economic benefits of early learning are clear and compelling. Cost-benefit analyses performed on the long-term returns of quality early childhood programs show returns of \$4 to \$8 for every \$1 invested. The return on investment is significant for the individual (in increased earnings), the government (in decreased special education, remediation, and welfare costs), and society

(in decreased crime and its related costs). Most of the costs are incurred by age 5; the majority of the benefits occur between the ages of 18 and 27. Cost benefits are calculated by adding all of the proven cost savings generated from such programs (plus the other related costs incurred, such as increased public expenditures as more youth attend public colleges), and then subtracting the cost of the original implementation.

A number of states across the country have leveraged this body of research and used it as a model for bringing quality early learning to scale.

- Over the past 20 years, Illinois has made quality early learning a priority. The state has been an innovator in expanding early learning to include home-based and birth-to-3 programs. It has done so through a state-funded early childhood block grant with a set-aside for birth-to-3 programs.
- In Oklahoma, free, high-quality pre-kindergarten is available to all 4-year-olds. Districts that choose to provide pre-kindergarten are reimbursed for each child enrolled. In 2004, the program was funded at \$72 million and served more than 30,000 children—65 percent of the children eligible.

- In North Carolina, Smart Start is a public initiative that provides early education funding to all the state's 100 counties. State funding for Smart Start is currently \$192 million. The funds are used to improve the quality of childcare, make it more affordable and accessible, provide access to health services, and offer family support.
- New Jersey provides the highest level of funding for pre-kindergarten programs of any state in the country. The New Jersey Supreme Court has mandated that all children in districts where at least 40 percent of children qualify for free or reduced-cost school lunches have access to quality pre-kindergarten programs. Currently, the Abbott Preschool Programs receive \$365 million annually from the state, and "non-Abbott" children benefit from a separate preschool program that receives \$30 million annually.

The early learning movement is also global. At the 1990 World Conferences on Education for All in Thailand, 155 countries including the United States signed a declaration that "Learning begins at birth." In 2000, the World Education Forum in Dakar established "expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children" as one of six international goals. In the European Union, 25 states have agreed

to the Barcelona Target, which states that 90 percent of all children ages 4 and 5 should have access to early childhood development, and that 33 percent of children from birth-to-3 should have access to early learning. Europe has led the way with promising models, including Reggio Emilia in Italy, Les Ecoles Maternelles in France, and Sure Start in the United Kingdom.

The economic benefits of early learning are significant. Cost-benefit analyses performed on the long-term returns of quality early childhood programs show returns of \$4 to \$8 for every \$1 invested.

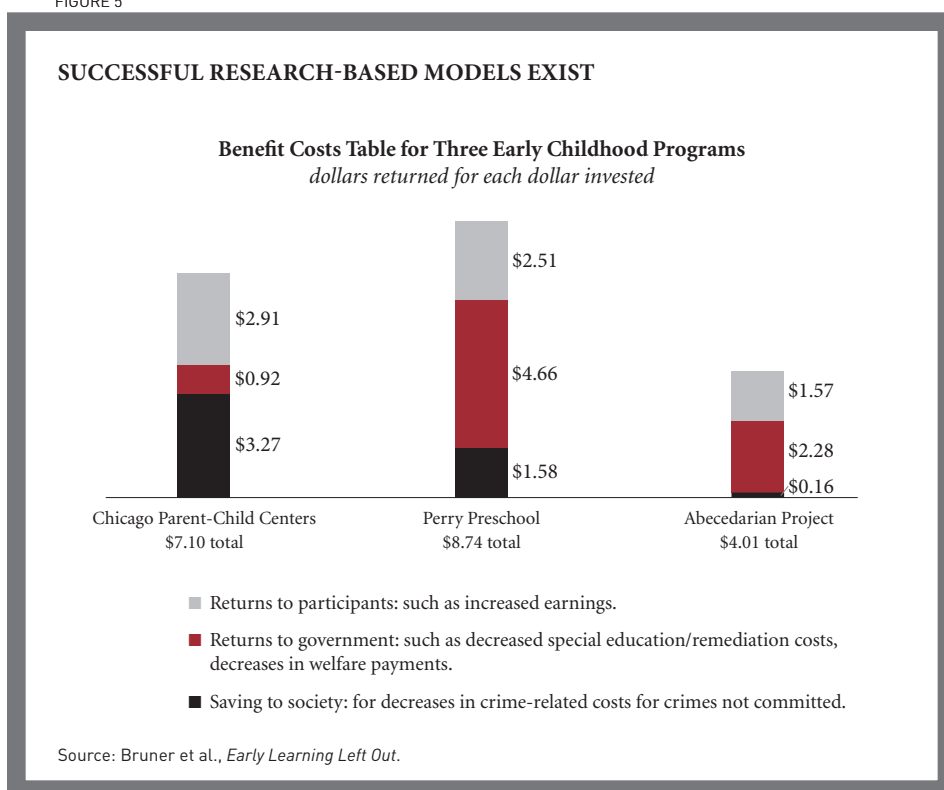
3. Highest potential for impact. The foundation aims to fund efforts that will bring the greatest benefit to the greatest number of children in Washington state. Significant research, including that of Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman, shows that the greatest return on investment is achieved by investing in children at the earliest age possible. See Figure 6.²¹

Heckman's research is based on evidence of the way skills are formed, and it expresses his fundamental belief that investments made early in childhood create a "skill multiplier" effect. That is, "skill begets skill, and learning begets more learning. Early advantages accumulate, just as early disadvantages do."

Much of the cost-effectiveness of early learning has been demonstrated repeatedly across a wide range of positive outcomes: reduced crime and delinquency; increased educational achievement; reduced grade repetition and special education; increased employment, productivity, and earnings; and less welfare dependency.²²

The real internal rate of return for high-quality early learning programs is estimated at 16 percent, with 80 percent of those returns benefiting the general public, primarily in the form of crime reduction. (The internal rate of return is an alternate measure for determining the benefits of early learning. It calculates the "interest rate" received for an investment that consists of payments and revenue occurring at regular annual periods, much in the way one would assess the rate of return on an investment such as stocks or bonds.)²³

FIGURE 5



Early learning results in significant social and emotional gains:

- *School-readiness.* Research shows that quality early learning can help nearly all children enter kindergarten ready to learn. Children who enter kindergarten behind their classmates are unlikely to ever catch up. Over time, the gap often widens.²⁴
- *Emotional and social benefits.* Studies show that quality early learning increases emotional, social, and behavioral skills. These noncognitive skills lead to greater motivation, self-discipline, and persistence.²⁵
- *Abuse and neglect reduction.* Research shows that strong early care programs can dramatically reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect.²⁶

4. Opportunity for strong partnerships.

Washington state has a growing community of champions for early learning. The public and private sectors are coming together around early learning, creating a climate of excitement and optimism about the possibilities.

Strong public champions for early learning are both legislative and gubernatorial. They also are bipartisan.

In May 2005, the Washington Legislature passed HR 1152, which established a public-private early learning commission through the governor's office to improve the quality of early learning statewide. In June 2005, Gov. Christine Gregoire, who promoted early learning during her campaign, launched Washington Learns, an 18-month comprehensive study to examine our state's existing education system from early learning through K-12 to higher education, and recommend ways to improve it now and in the future. The governor's bipartisan Early Learning Council includes Sen. Bill Finkbeiner, Rep. Ruth Kagi, Sen. Jeanne Kohl-Welles, and Rep. Jan Shabro. In the Washington Legislature, other strong supporters include Majority Leader Lisa Brown and House Speaker Frank Chopp. Mike McGavick, the outgoing CEO of Safeco and presumed candidate for the U.S. Senate, was a founding member of the Business Partnership for Early Learning.

In the business sector, the City of Seattle Chamber of Commerce has launched the Business Partnership for Early Learning, aimed at closing the school-preparedness gap among 2- to 3-year-olds in King County most likely to be left behind. Boeing and Safeco are substantial investors of the initiative.

Private/partner support. Service providers are committed to expanding quality early learning in Washington, and major donors such as the Apex Foundation, the Foundation for Early Learning, Social Venture Partners, and the United Way are committed to them. There are a growing number of organizations advocating for early learning, such as the Children's Alliance, the Early Care and Education Coalition, and the Collaborative.

National momentum for early learning includes partnerships such as the Early Childhood Funders Collaborative and a number of national models that are ready to be expanded and replicated.

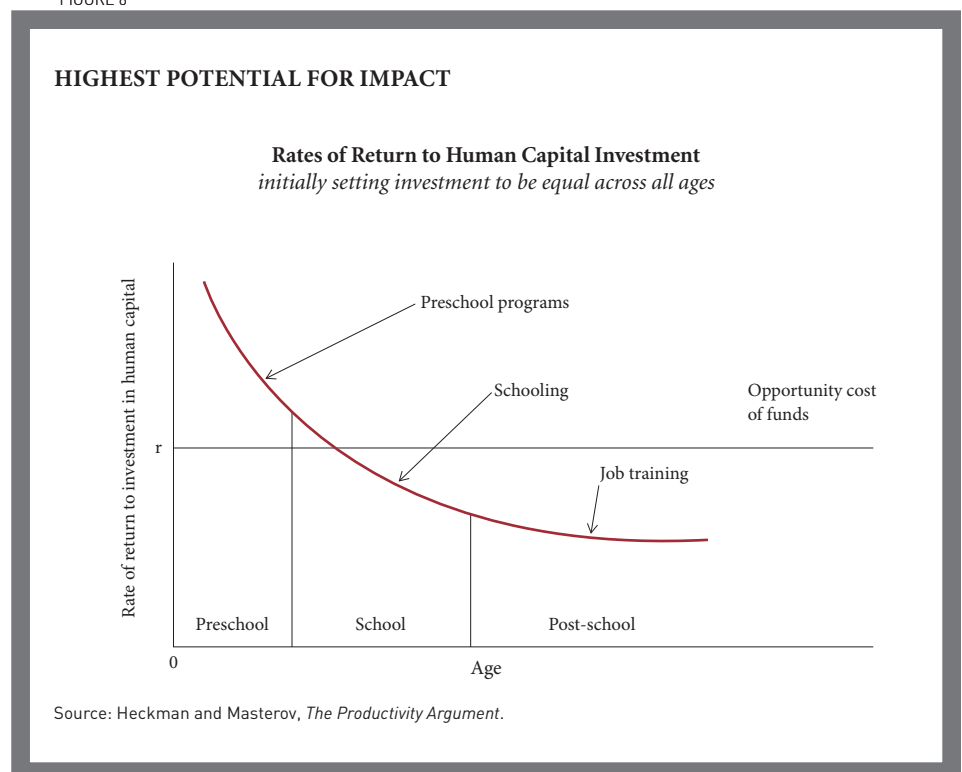
5. Critical need exists in Washington. Finally, early learning meets the foundation's criteria for addressing critical needs in Washington state. The public subsidy rate for children in Washington has fallen from covering the cost of 75 percent of childcare center slots in 2000 to only 24 percent in 2004. Washington ranks 23rd in the country for access to pre-kindergarten programs for 4-year-olds.²⁷

Together, Head Start and the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (state-funded preschool in Washington) reach only 51 percent of eligible low-income 4-year-olds.²⁸ And Early Head Start reaches only 3 percent of all eligible 0- to 3-year-olds in Washington state.²⁹

While programs for young children do exist, they are often of low or poor quality. Washington has no statewide quality standards for early learning. Nationally, the only measurement of quality is accreditation, which reaches a shamefully low number of children—only 6 percent of total centers in Washington. As Figure 7 shows, there is a dramatic shortage of affordable, high-quality early learning, especially for those families that would benefit most. This inequity in access is dramatic; less than 12 percent of the state's accredited childcare centers are located in the lowest-income communities.³⁰ Ensuring that all children have access to appropriate, high-quality early learning is at the heart of the foundation's mission.

Early Head Start reaches only 3 percent of all eligible 0- to 3-year-olds in Washington state.

FIGURE 6



PART 3: OUR STRATEGY

The foundation is taking a strategic approach to early learning based on our theory of change (how everyone working together can leverage significant change) and our theory of action (the part we will play in making it happen).

Our theory of change. If public and private entities in our state join forces to create an aligned network of prevention and treatment efforts for children and youth—spanning from prenatal to 18—we can create opportunities for all Washington’s children to become successful young adults. (See Appendix D.)

Our theory of action. If our foundation makes a focused, 10-year investment in early learning in Washington state, we can help create the public and political will to develop a sustainable system of affordable, high-quality early learning across the state. Ultimately, our actions and those of our partners will lead to higher levels of school-readiness, greater success in school, fewer negative adolescent behaviors, and a greater likelihood of successful young adulthood. See Figure 8.

An overview of our investment strategy.

Working closely with other public and private funders, we will take a threefold approach, investing in 1) targeted demonstration communities; 2) promising models; and 3) statewide efforts to build and support the infrastructure for early learning. Our theory of action is based on first demonstrating a

Washington state quality early learning model in select communities as proof of a concept that can inform and create demand for expanding that model to every community in the state. (See Appendix E.)

Approach #1: Targeted Demonstration Communities

Targeted demonstration communities are a key component of our long-term investment strategy. We will work with two communities to develop a comprehensive initiative to ensure that all children and families within these selected communities have access to high-quality early learning. These two communities will exemplify the effectiveness of early learning in improving outcomes for young children, and will inform our statewide grants. (See Appendix F.) These demonstration communities will have:

- High concentrations of children with two or more risk factors.
- Strong local capacity.
- Demonstrative evidence of broad support.
- Appropriate size (2,000–3,000 children age 0–5).
- Demographic, political, and geographic diversity.

Using these criteria, we will select one demonstration community in Eastern Washington and one in Western Washington. We will identify and invite a short list of potential communities to submit a letter of inquiry, and we anticipate making the final community selections by summer of 2006.

Our aim is to reach a majority of children age 0–5 in the demonstration communities, including at least 70 percent of children in poverty. We expect this comprehensive community approach to:

- Reach children where they are spending the majority of their day, whether in childcare or with a parent or caregiver, through a variety of interventions.
- Demonstrate the value of a mixed-income model.
- Demonstrate the effectiveness of strengthening the existing infrastructure.
- Involve school districts in early learning.
- Involve other public and private partners.
- Provide a platform to educate statewide constituents on the effectiveness of high-quality early learning.

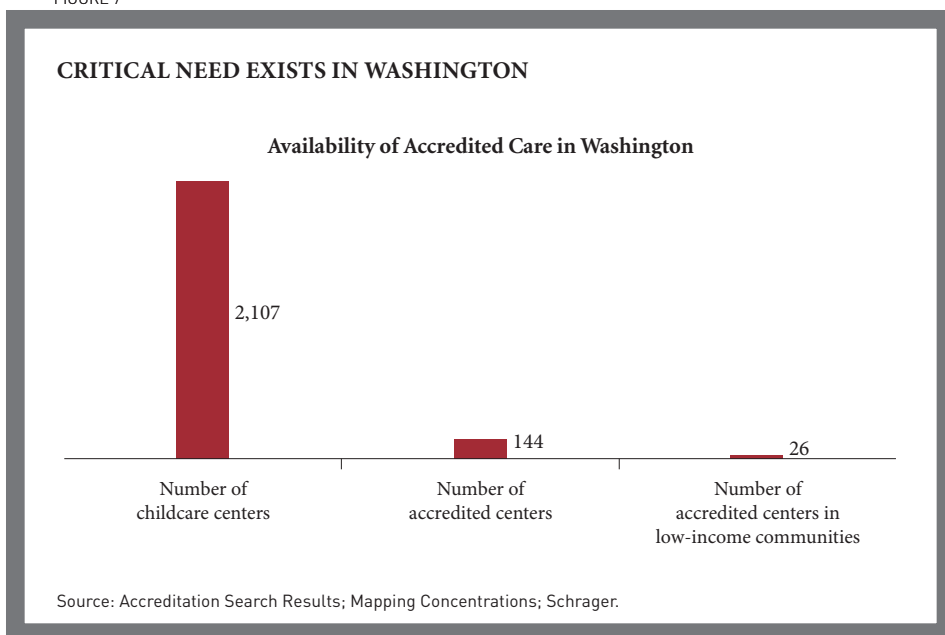
What are we trying to impact?

Parent support and education. Through a variety of programs inside and outside of the home, parents and caregivers will receive information, training, and support to be their children’s first and most important teachers.

Comprehensive early learning centers that serve the whole community. Our funding approach is to create a coordinated network of quality early learning in the demonstration communities, building new resources and strengthening existing efforts. This will include tailoring services to meet the unique needs of each family. Central to this approach is building one model childcare center, or “hub,” per community, that serves the entire community.

Licensed childcare. Using a variety of approaches, we will transform existing licensed childcare in the two demonstration communities from today’s low and moderate quality to high-quality, affordable early learning environments. These communities, which will include new high-quality “hub” centers, will demonstrate quality and act as a catalyst in transforming the more than 2,100 existing centers and nearly 6,200 existing home-based centers statewide.

FIGURE 7



What are the critical actions that can affect this change?

Quality improvements:

- Expand support and education for parents.
- Create and implement standards of quality for early learning.
- Create opportunities and incentives for teachers to increase training and professional development.
- Create incentives for existing childcare to improve.

Access:

- Make quality early learning affordable and accessible to *all* children and families within the demonstration communities.

Program guidelines: What we will fund in demonstration communities.

In the two demonstration communities, the foundation will support the development of community plans to implement comprehensive early learning strategies. After the approval of a communitywide business plan for early learning, our funding will support a wide range of programs, classes, and development, including professional development, curriculum development, physical improvements, pre- and post-natal support programs, home-based literacy programs, parent support programs, child development classes, information and referral resources, case management, and community education classes.

Approach #2: Promising Models

Through promising model grants, the foundation will support innovative efforts on a smaller scale to improve early learning for children throughout Washington state. Specifically, the foundation is interested in supporting community-based efforts that replicate proven effective models or hold the promise of adding to the knowledge base about what works well for young children.

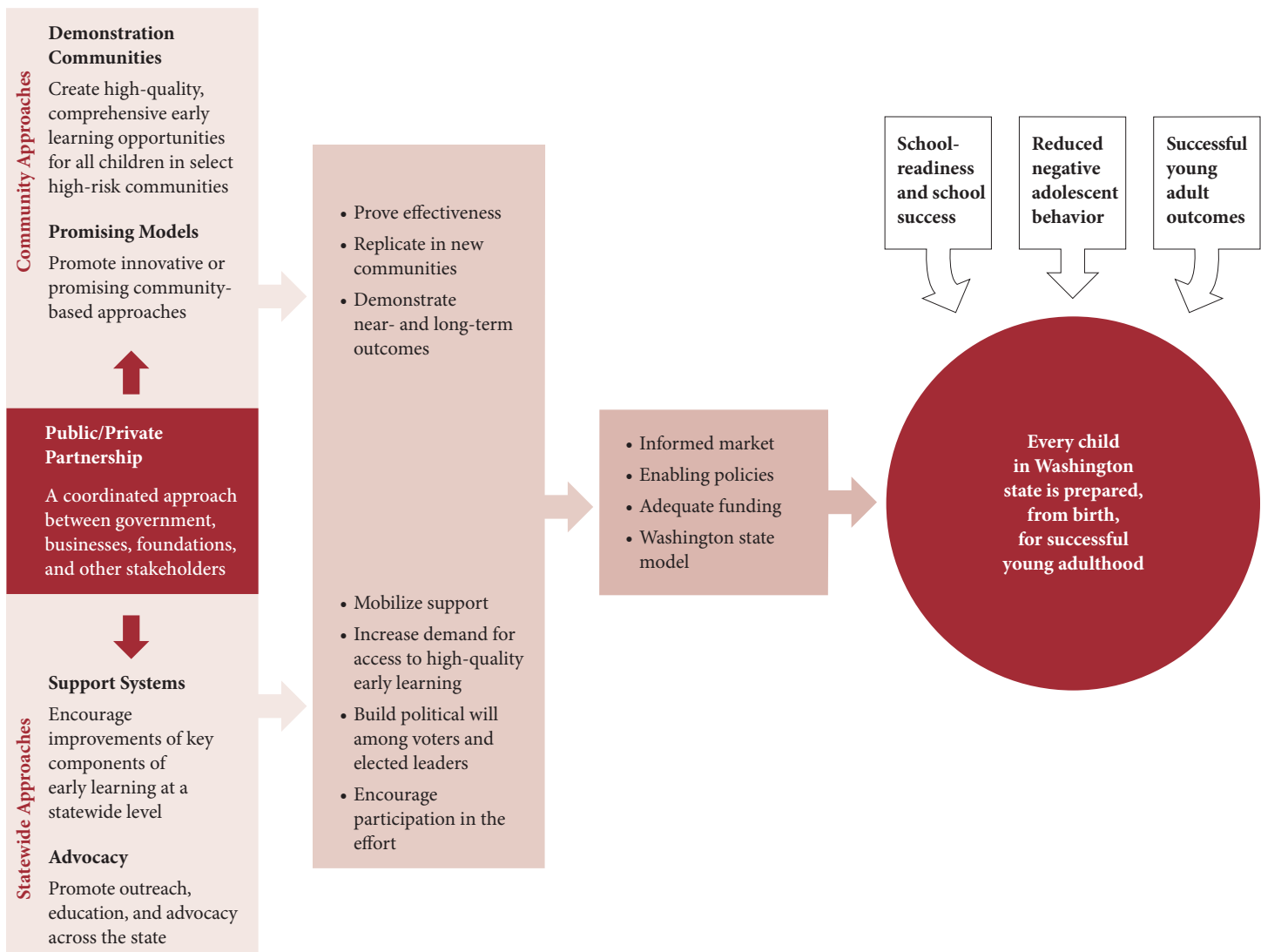
What are we trying to impact?

Build knowledge about what works. Although we know a lot about what high-quality early learning looks like, there is more to learn, particularly about how to effectively bring proven practices to scale.

FIGURE 8

OUR THEORY OF ACTION

- 1 If we invest here... → 2 ...and accomplish these near-term goals... → 3 then we can establish... → 4 ...and ultimately achieve measurable, long-term goals.



What are the critical actions that can affect this change?

Program replication:

- Fund collaborative efforts to coordinate community-based early learning efforts.
- Create replicable programs based on proven research models.

New models:

- Demonstrate the effectiveness of promising new approaches.
- Work in diverse communities to expand approaches to providing families and children with access to quality early learning.

Program guidelines: What we will fund in communities across the state.

The foundation will be proactive in working with communities, institutions, public agencies, and nonprofits that are focused on the following:

- *Community.* Implement community-based collaborative efforts focused on creating high-quality early learning.
- *Replication.* Expand, or take to scale, proven models that are known to improve outcomes for families and young children.
- *Innovative approaches.* Design, test, or research early learning models that will inform and advance early learning in Washington.

Recipients of our promising models grants will be aligned with Washington state's benchmarks for early learning and development, which are being designed to ensure that children are prepared for school. Currently under study by the Washington Learns Early Learning Council, these benchmarks include physical well-being, health, and motor development; social and emotional development; approaches toward learning; cognition and general knowledge; and language, communication, and literacy. Eligible programs may be focused on children in licensed care or children at home with a caregiver.

In addition to being aligned with state benchmarks, programs must be committed to meeting our five standards of quality: 1) highly trained and adequately compensated teachers; 2) strong, research-driven curriculum emphasizing emotional, social, cognitive, and physical development; 3) research-based education and programs for parents, along with parental involvement in care; 4) low child:teacher ratios; and 5) appropriate physical space.

Approach #3: Statewide Efforts

In close partnership with other public and private stakeholders, the foundation will support, promote, and encourage statewide efforts to improve early learning across the state. These efforts include programmatic initiatives, education, and advocacy efforts as well as other strategic opportunities for statewide early learning improvements.

In developing our statewide approach, we studied a number of other states that have succeeded in elevating the importance of quality early childhood learning and in galvanizing public and private support. In California, Illinois, and North Carolina, the keys to success are remarkably similar. All three states have strong champions, effective organizations, public education, political will and capital, robust private support, demonstration projects, and research and evaluation. (See Appendix G.) In Washington state, many of these key elements are in their nascent stages—being discussed or proposed, with an ongoing need to build political will and capital.

What are we trying to impact?

Our statewide early learning efforts are built upon the following main objectives:

- Encourage appropriate public investment and the creation of policies and infrastructure to support quality early learning.
- Increase public understanding of, and support for, quality early learning.
- Broaden the participation of partners to invest, act as advocates for quality early learning, and bring new voices to the field.
- Promote necessary infrastructure improvements, such as quality standards, teacher training, and birth-to-3 programs.

The first three objectives provide a framework for three interrelated strategies targeted at three primary audiences: government; the public, including parents, guardians, and communities; and partners such as providers, businesses, foundations, and nonprofit organizations. See Figure 9.

What are the critical actions that can affect this change?

Creating a system that rates and rewards quality and informs parents. A system to measure the quality of early learning must be developed in Washington that will inform parents and reward quality improvements. Such a system will include incentives for early learning programs to achieve levels of quality above basic licensing and accept more children on state subsidy.

Informing and educating on the importance of early learning. Along with our partners, we have a plan to inform, educate, and advocate for quality early learning statewide. We will use the two demonstration communities and our investments in promising models as platforms to advocate about the need for statewide policy change and increased public financing for all Washington children. We also will work to build and provide evidence, knowledge, and tools for those working in the field.

Building a strong infrastructure to support access to quality early learning for all children. Ensuring that all children have access to quality early learning requires strengthening, expanding, and aligning many of our state systems for supporting children and families. As quality standards are created, additional training and monitoring will be needed.

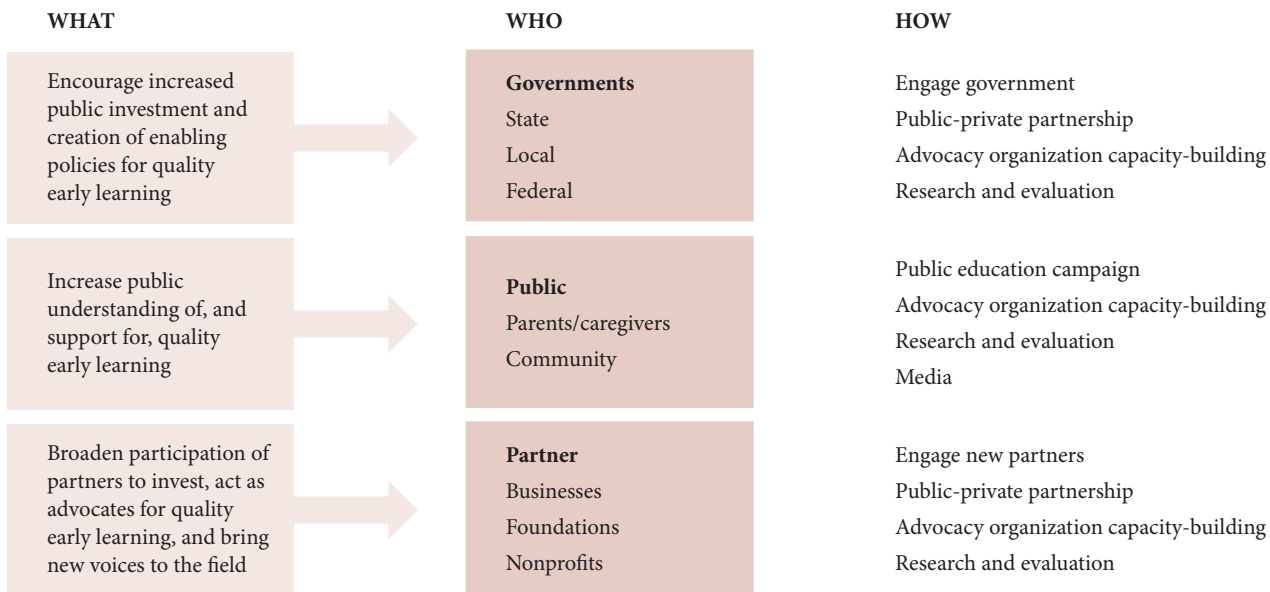
Program guidelines: What we will fund at the statewide level.

We will make grants in the areas of system improvements, policy research, awareness and education, and community outreach.

System improvements. We will fund efforts that have potential to improve, streamline, or coordinate the children and family support systems in Washington state. Examples include public-private, quality-improvement initiatives, the creation of needed infrastructure, and other statewide approaches to improve early learning across the state.

APPROACH #3: STATEWIDE ADVOCACY

Three Interrelated Strategies Targeted at Three Primary Audiences



Policy research. Our funding will support efforts to build the evidence base for quality early learning and to inform policy development, such as researching possible finance models to increase the quality and availability of early learning for all Washington children, and modeling a statewide early learning system.

Awareness and education. We will fund activities to increase public understanding of the importance of quality early learning and school-readiness. These may include the development of communication materials to promote quality early learning; education of policymakers, key leaders and constituencies, parents and caregivers, and the general public about the need for quality early learning and core requirements; and the development of media strategies to raise the visibility about the need and promote positive examples.

Community outreach. We will fund efforts to mobilize support for quality early learning and to increase collaboration among the various groups involved. We need to cultivate strong champions, foster bipartisan support, and bring together a diversity of advocates for quality early learning to ensure all Washington children have access and the opportunity for success in school and life.

The cost of bringing early learning to scale.

Over the next 10 years, the foundation will invest up to \$90 million in early learning, which is dependent upon other public and private investment in the near term to match our contribution. Ultimately, the dollars we invest through this strategy are intended to leverage significant new public investments in early learning in order to sustain and expand the demonstration communities and promising models statewide. Our strategy is aimed at creating the public and political will needed to achieve this goal within 10 years. With increased state commitment, the improved quality of early learning in demonstration communities will become sustainable, and high-quality early learning will become a reality for all children in Washington state.

It won't be easy or inexpensive. We believe the cost of closing the school-readiness gap by setting high standards for quality early learning may necessitate more than doubling current expenditures (including federal and state funds).

Why are we optimistic about such a big bet?

- *A growing number of states have significantly increased investment in early learning.* In addition to California, Illinois, Georgia, and Oklahoma's significant increases, other states have proposed major increases: Hawaii (162 percent); Iowa (177 percent); New Mexico (462 percent); and Tennessee (250 percent).³¹
- *Washington has the beginnings of community and state-level bipartisan support.* In its 2005 session, the Washington state Legislature passed a \$26 million increase in subsidies for childcare, with bipartisan support. In the summer of 2005, Gov. Christine Gregoire launched the Washington Learns study, which includes a new public-private commission to make recommendations for the future of the state's early learning system.
- *Washington has business and private foundation leadership and support behind early learning.* The new Seattle Business Partnership for Early Learning has strong financial and leadership support from Boeing, Safeco, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Seattle Foundation.

- *Washington state has a legacy of the public supporting substantial new dollars for new policy priorities.* In 2005, we have seen the passage of an \$8.5 billion transportation package (Washington), a \$130 million Family and Education Levy (Seattle), and a new hospital levy (King County).
- *Washington state government is reassessing how it manages children's issues due to past failures.* Gov. Gregoire has made reforming early learning a top priority.
- *Cost-effective prevention approaches are gaining momentum in Olympia, and quality early learning is an approach that more than pays for itself.* The Legislature recently had the Washington State Institute for Public Policy rate a variety of prevention measures on their cost-effectiveness. Additionally, in its 2005 session, the state Legislature passed a bill, which elects to reinvest projected cost savings from reducing youth incarceration into proven effective family-based therapies that will divert youth out of the juvenile justice system and create better outcomes for children and families.

What are the major risks of our early learning strategy?

We developed our strategy for quality early learning with an understanding of the risks involved. No statewide undertaking of this magnitude is without challenges, but by being aware of them from the beginning, we have shaped our program to address and minimize risks:

Sustainability. The long-term success of quality early learning will require an increase in public understanding and financial support. The state's current economy and budget crisis make it challenging to increase public investment in early learning with existing revenues. There is limited public will to increase public revenues to fund any new social program, and limited understanding of the value of early learning among key stakeholders.

Our strategy includes components to educate parents and the community on the value of quality early learning. As the foundation's funding decreases over time, we will have increased the capacity of education and advocacy organizations that can educate, inform, and mobilize key stakeholders on this issue.

Nascent early learning advocacy. Currently there are a limited number of organizations focused on early learning advocacy. Our strategy requires partnerships with, and active participation by, early learning providers and advocates. As much as possible, we intend to work within the existing infrastructure to expand capacity, coordination, and expertise in the field. Our strategy includes investments in increasing the capacity of advocacy and early learning organizations.

Managing expectations. While there is much discussion about early learning in the state, change has been slow. Many may look to the foundation as the funding solution to the problems of early learning.

We base our strategy on a public-private partnership, and we will not invest funding until partners agree to join the effort. The foundation will likely play a critical role in mobilizing and coordinating efforts, but as a convener and catalyst funder—not a sole funding entity.

Opposing views. Critiques of preschool programs have been published. Some believe that birth-to-3 is a time for children to be with their parents, and that government should not interfere. Some parents do not want their children in a "government program."

We will support parents and stakeholders on the components of quality early learning and how it benefits children. Our strategy reaches parents and children where they already are—at home or in childcare—but does not advocate moving children from one arena to another. Lastly, the program will be voluntary, never mandatory.

Increasing costs for some parents. Increasing the quality of existing childcare will increase the per-child cost of operating. While encouraging state subsidies for low-income children is part of our advocacy strategy, moderate-income families may see the costs of childcare rise.

Creating innovative, thoughtful public-private partnerships will offset the costs of increased teacher salaries for all children, not just low-income children. Our advocacy strategy includes encouraging increase of the subsidy eligibility to include families whose earnings exceed the current cutoff for subsidy (185 percent of the federal poverty level). We will seek to create models of affordable quality at existing centers in order to keep costs as moderate as possible.

PART 4: THE IMPACT: ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

We believe that by investing in early learning we will improve outcomes for children over both the short and long term.

Short term

- In the two demonstration communities, an increase in rates of kindergarten-readiness, and in the rates of children age 0–5 meeting appropriate developmental benchmarks.
- Statewide, narrowing of the school-readiness gap between low-income and high-income children.
- Increased public and private investment for early learning.

Long term

- Greater success of children and youth throughout school years.
- Reduced rates of negative behaviors—such as teen pregnancy and criminal activity—and increased positive behaviors among adolescents.
- Greater likelihood of success in young adulthood.
- Sustained commitment of public investment to early learning.

Research shows that intensive early childhood programs reduce problem adolescent behavior by at least 20 percentage points. They also increase positive behavior. In selected results from the Abecedarian, Perry Preschool, and Chicago Parent-Child Center studies, the effect of participation in early childhood programs is evident across a number of positive indicators at age 20 and later in life. Compared to the control group that had no early childhood learning programs, more of these children went on to complete high school, attend college, and gain skilled employment. Fewer of them had to repeat a grade, became binge drinkers, became teen parents, used marijuana, or had a juvenile arrest record. See Figure 10.³²

What is achievable?

Based on existing studies, we have set a goal to achieve the following results by 2014:

- *Significantly increase the school-readiness rate* among all children entering kindergarten in the targeted demonstration communities. A survey by the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction estimates that currently only 25 percent of all Washington state children in low-income kindergarten classrooms are school-ready (vs. 58 percent in high-income classrooms).³³
- *Statewide, reduce the gap* between low-income and high-income children's rate of school-readiness.

How will we track the outcomes of our efforts?

We will monitor and evaluate a series of measurable outcomes among children, parents, teachers, childcare, and the system statewide. We are currently working with independent evaluators to design the program evaluation.

What will we do with what we've learned?

Improve the program by asking ourselves key questions. Are our interventions working as intended? How do we improve them? What models are best for specific populations? Are we reaching the children and parents we most want to reach? Based on what we learn, we will modify the program as we go forward.

Educate and inform. We also will use what we learn to educate and inform others in the early learning field, facilitate programmatic and organizational improvements, and drive change.

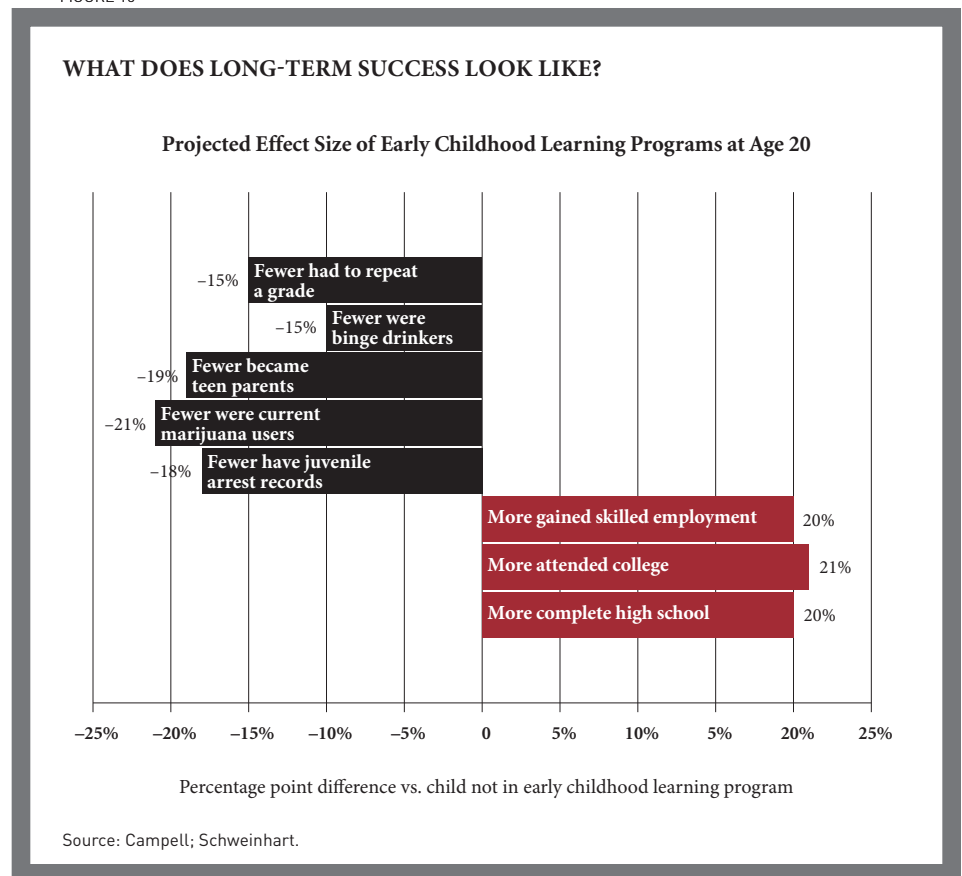
PART 5: IMPLEMENTING OUR EARLY LEARNING STRATEGY

We envision working with both a public-private partnership and community-level intermediaries to implement our strategy. Our operational plan emphasizes a partnership that coordinates and manages statewide and community operations.

Ideally, a statewide public-private partnership will administer pooled funds, make recommendations through “aligned” funding, oversee community efforts, provide technical assistance and monitor quality, coordinate advocacy efforts, work with the evaluation team, and raise money.

Community-level intermediary organizations, which may or may not be the service providers in a given locale, will lead in coordinating services, manage subcontractors, develop and implement a business plan for the community, and raise local matching funds.

FIGURE 10



APPENDIX A

How do we define “at-risk”?

Children with any two of the following risk factors (poverty being the most prevalent) are considered at-risk of failure throughout their school years and beyond. A wealth of research supports this definition. The risk factors that we chose to include are (this list is not comprehensive):

- Poverty
- Single or no parent
- No parent employed full time/full year
- All parents with disability
- Mother does not have high school degree
- No parent fluent in English

Source: University of Washington Human Services Policy Center.

What do we mean by “successful young adulthood”?

The foundation asked two leading researchers in youth development to help us define what successful young adulthood looks like. Peter Benson, a leader of the asset development school of youth development, and Dr. David Hawkins, the leading researcher in risk and protective factors for children, defined successful young adulthood to include the following measurable outcomes:

- Physical health
- Psychological and emotional well-being
- Life skills
- Healthy family and social relationships,
- Educational attainment and civic engagement

Visit <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/nr/downloads/PNWG/EarlyLearning/SuccessfulDevelopment.pdf> for executive summary of this report.

APPENDIX B

Snapshot of Washington state’s population.

Snapshot of Washington state’s population

- Total population (2003): 6,131,445
 - 1,440,000 children 0–17 years of age
 - 80,000 children in each birth cohort
 - 480,000 children 0–5 years of age
 - 960,000 youth 6–17 years of age
 - 560,000 young adults 18–24 years of age
- Racial/ethnic distribution
 - White: 81.3%
 - Asian/Pacific Islander: 6.8%
 - African-American: 3.3%
 - Native American: 1.2%
 - Multiracial/other: 3.8%
 - Other: 3.6%
 - Hispanic or Latino of any race: 8.0%

Poverty*

- Total population: 10.3%
- Children 0–5: 16.4%
- Children 6–17: 13.6%

*The 2005 federal poverty guideline as defined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is \$19,350 for a family of four.

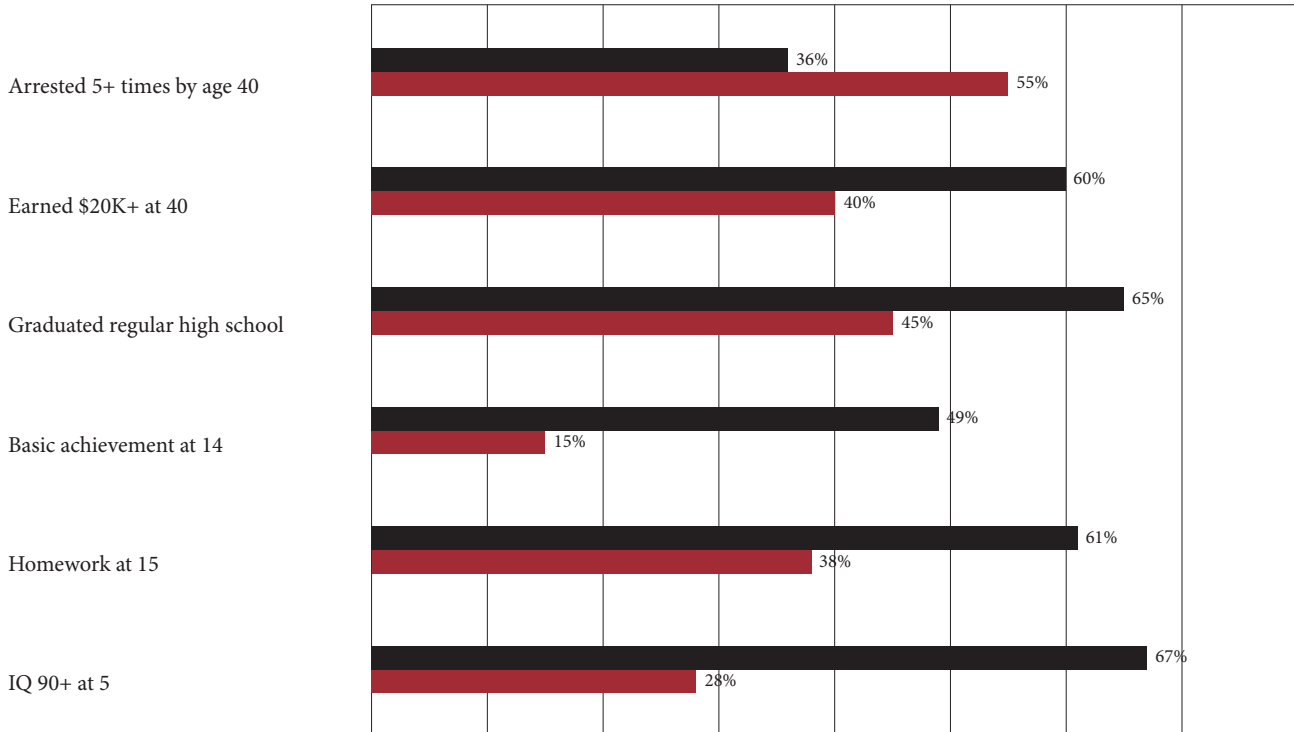
Source: U.S. Census.

APPENDIX C

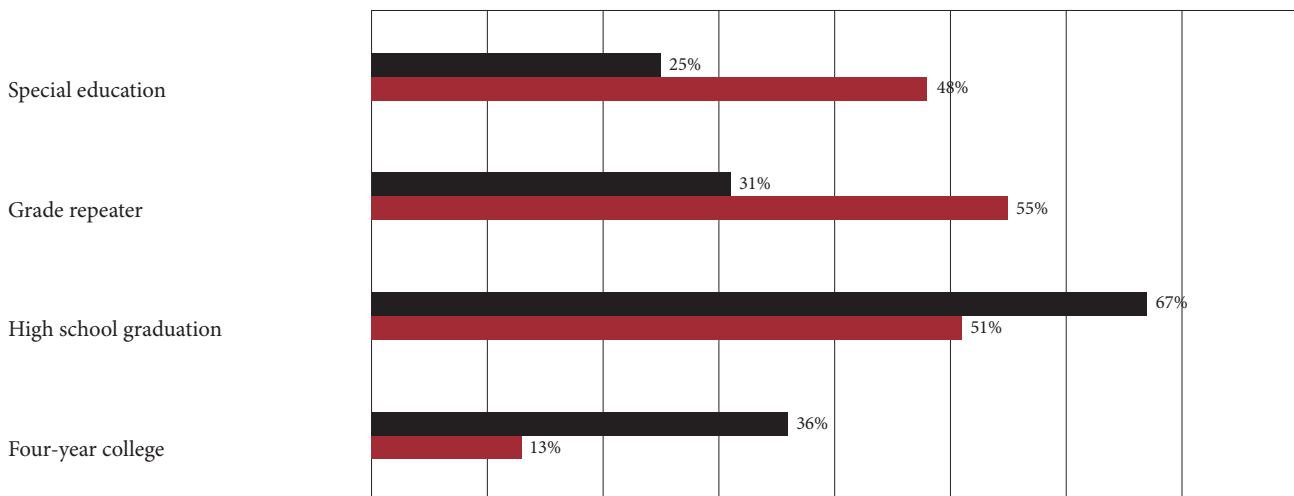
SUCCESSFUL RESEARCH-BASED MODELS EXIST

High/Scope Perry Preschool in Michigan and the Abecedarian Project in North Carolina are two landmark research efforts that demonstrate the longitudinal impact of high-quality early learning.

High/Scope Perry Preschool: 40-year study of 123 low-income African-American children who were assessed to be at high-risk of school failure (58 were assigned to program group that received high-quality preschool at ages 3 and 4, while 65 were assigned to another group that received no preschool program).



The Abecedarian Project: Controlled study in which 57 infants from low-income families were randomly assigned to receive high-quality childcare from birth to age 5 and 54 children were in a non-treated control group.



■ Program group (received high-quality early learning) ■ Non-program/control group (did not receive high-quality early learning)

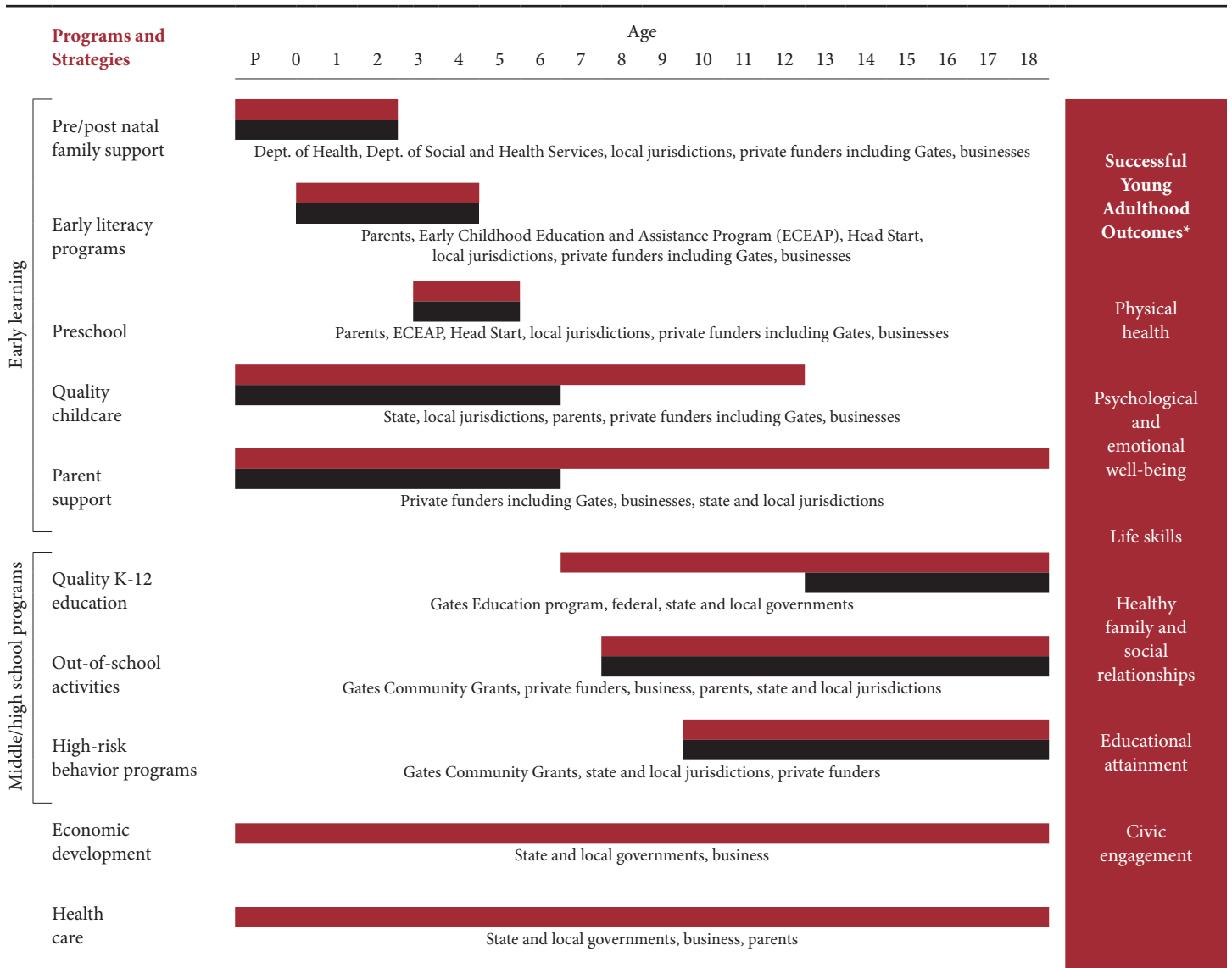
Source: Heckman and Masterov, *The Productivity Argument*.

APPENDIX D

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

If public and private entities in our state join forces to create an aligned network of prevention and treatment efforts for children and youth—spanning from prenatal to 18—we can create opportunities for all of Washington’s children to become successful young adults.

A Continuum of Youth-Development Investments



*See Appendix A.

APPENDIX E

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

Our strategy is to work closely with other public and private funders and invest in the following three areas:

| | Targeted Demonstration Communities Approach | Promising Models Approach | Statewide Approach |
|-------------------|---|---|---|
| Overview | Comprehensive network of high-quality early learning in two demonstration communities. Includes the creation of new early learning centers, but with the primary emphasis on improving existing early learning care. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community-based efforts that involve multiple community partners Interesting/promising models that have potential to be replicated and/or taken to scale | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important initiatives involving multiple partners that will impact early learning statewide Invest in components of early learning support systems Promote outreach, education, and advocacy across the state |
| Components | Within each demonstration community, we will fund: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One high-quality early learning center Improvements to existing licensed childcare Home-based programs Parent/community education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects involving multiple community-level partners in a coordinated approach to increase quality early learning Promote innovative or promising approaches to early learning Pilot projects or program replication Capacity building | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statewide impact Multiple funding partners Strong ability to pool funding May be managed by an intermediary |
| Examples | Targeted high-risk, high-need communities—one in Eastern Washington and one in Western Washington | Funding may support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community-based approaches Replication or development of best practice models Promising new approaches | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy and community education Training programs Higher education programs Parent education programs |
| Grants | Fund communities over the long term as a major funder as well as contribute to fundraising and advocacy. Expect other public and private co-funders. | Fund partially, but require high level of local fundraising and partner match. Funding would be provided for 1–5 years. | Funding would nearly always involve other public and private funding. |
| Rationale | Demonstrate the effectiveness of creating high-quality early learning opportunities for all kids in high-risk communities on outcomes for school-readiness and lifelong success. Use the knowledge to inform and educate with the goal of bringing these elements to scale for all kids in Washington and improve statewide outcomes. | Support innovative approaches to bringing quality early learning to children and families in diverse communities across the state. Expand the knowledge base about how to bring early learning to scale across the state. | Invest in large scale, statewide initiatives that build the support systems and capacity to ensure that all families and children in the state have access to high-quality early learning opportunities. |

APPENDIX F

TARGETED DEMONSTRATION COMMUNITIES

Our funding approach is to create a coordinated network of quality early learning in two demonstration communities, building new resources and strengthening existing efforts. This includes providing differential services to meet the unique needs of each family. Central to this is building a model childcare center, or a “hub,” that serves the whole community.

| Programmatic Components | Attributes | To demonstrate what? | Rationale |
|--|--|--|--|
| Create early learning hubs (1 per community) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly trained and appropriately compensated teachers Proven effective curriculum Family support programs Physically appropriate space Provides technical assistance to existing centers Serves primarily high-risk children Blends state and federal funds Integrates community support programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact of high-quality care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved outcomes for high-risk children Improved outcomes for families Impact of blended funding Focal point for early learning in community Demonstration of high quality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a state model of early learning Mobilize community around early learning |
| Improve existing centers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher training connected to compensation training with appropriate compensation Improved facilities Effective curriculum Mixed income | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact of modest investments in early care Impact of public/private partnerships Platform for advocacy strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve quality for <i>all</i> children within select communities |
| Expand home-based support programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home visits for new births Promote early literacy and strong attachments at home Family support programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Importance of 0–3 Cost-effectiveness of early intervention Improved outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support parents Reach children where they are |
| Expand parent/community education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of child’s development Importance of quality early learning Positive parenting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavior change Increase demand for quality early learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build public support Educate parents and stakeholders |

APPENDIX G

ADVOCACY SUCCESS FACTORS

We studied a number of other states that have succeeded in elevating the importance of quality early learning and galvanizing public and private support and found the following common factors.

| | California (\$723M annually) | Illinois (\$30M added annually for 10 years) | North Carolina (\$220M annually) |
|-------------------------|---|---|----------------------------------|
| Strong champions | Rob Reiner U.S. Rep. Michael Huffington U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer | Irving Harris | Gov. Jim Hunt Phil Kirk |
| Effective organization | California Commission on Children and Families, Preschool California | Ounce of Prevention, Day Care Action Council, Voices for Children | Smart Start |
| Public education | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Robust private support | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Demonstration projects | Varies by county | Educare | Yes |
| Research and evaluation | Yes; beginning to develop county-by-county | Some | Yes |

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