



PROMOTING SCHOOL READINESS THROUGH UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL BY KRISTEN OSHYN AND LAURA NEWLAND

***THE IDEA:** The federal government should provide financial incentives for states to add high-quality universal preschool programs to their public school systems in order to promote higher student achievement among students of all socioeconomic classes and provide long-term benefits to society.*

THE NEED FOR PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

A growing number of states are recognizing the need for broad access to preschool education. By 2005, forty states funded some form of preschool, most of which was targeted to low-income and at-risk children.¹ A review of 2006 State of the State addresses and budget proposals found that twenty-four governors mentioned early education or pre-kindergarten as a priority and proposed a combined increase in new funding of \$250 million.² Federal involvement in early education began in 1964 with the Head Start program, which was designed to reduce the achievement gap between wealthy and poor students by addressing school readiness. With increasing evidence supporting the long-term benefits of preschool and cost-benefit analyses favoring government funding for such programs, states have begun to expand access to preschool programs for their children. In 2005, eight states offered universal preschool, including Oklahoma, Georgia, and Florida.³ Illinois joined their ranks in 2006, breaking ground by being the first to offer universal preschool to both three- and four-year olds. Political momentum is building for universal preschool because Americans recognize the need to raise the academic achievement and social skills of their children and to support working parents.

Academic Achievement

In today's society, preschool prepares children to succeed academically and increase their chances of leading productive lives because developmental skills build upon each other. The longer children progress in school without learning basic skills, the wider the achievement gap grows, and the less likely they will be to catch up with their peers. Achievement gaps, particularly in young children, have long been explained by genetics, but recent research reveals that "if heredity defines the limits of intelligence . . . experience largely determines whether those limits will be reached. And if this is so, the prospects for remedying social inequalities may be better than we thought."⁴ Providing universal preschool will help all children reach their full potential, regardless of family income.

The Century Foundation conducts public policy research and analyses of economic, social, and foreign policy issues, including inequality, retirement security, election reform, media studies, homeland security, and international affairs. The foundation produces books, reports, and other publications, convenes task forces and working groups, and operates eight informational Web sites. With offices in New York City and Washington, D.C., The Century Foundation is nonprofit and nonpartisan and was founded in 1919 by Edward A. Filene.

Headquarters: 41 East 70th Street – New York, NY 10021 – 212.535.4441 – 212.535.7534 (fax) – info@tcf.org – www.tcf.org

DC Office: 1333 H Street, NW – 10th Floor Washington, DC – 202.232.8958 – 202.483.9430 (fax)

The majority of preschool age children already spend some time in child care and pre-school settings, but the United States still does not have an established means to ensure the quality of these primarily private programs. As a result, many American children continue to enter school without adequate preparation to succeed in an academic environment. Academic school readiness is measured by such skills as letter recognition, counting to twenty or higher, writing one's own name, and reading or pretending to read. In the United States, only 39 percent of children ages three to five had three or four of those skills.⁵

Although children living in poverty suffer the widest achievement gap, children from lower- and upper-middle class families also fall short of the ideal level of school readiness when compared with the wealthiest children.⁶

Social Skills of Children

Kindergarten teachers also take children's social skills into account when considering their "school readiness." Among those skills important for success in the classroom are the ability to not be disruptive, to be sensitive to other children's feelings, and to be able to communicate their thoughts and needs in words.⁷ Again, impoverished children suffer the widest achievement gap, but children from lower- and upper-middle class families also fall short of the ideal level of readiness when compared with the wealthiest children.⁸ Exposure to a classroom setting and being with other children in preschool provides a good environment in which children can learn these social skills vital to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

Additional Benefits

In addition to teaching children the social skills necessary to succeed in kindergarten, studies conducted both in the United States as well as abroad indicate that high-quality universal preschool programs can provide long-term social benefits, including lower crime rates and reduced dependency on welfare.⁹ Exposure to quality preschool programs also can have a positive impact on such things as the parenting skills of participants' parents, how well the children take care of their health, and even the pay rate of jobs secured by the participants' mothers, according to the studies of several early childhood intervention centers, including High/Scope Perry Preschool Program, Abecedarian Project, and the Chicago Child-Parent Centers.¹⁰

Support for Working Parents

Families are evolving with the times. While in years past mothers stayed at home to care for children, most are now part of the labor force. Some fathers stay at home in place of their wives, but they are rare, and most families cannot afford to lose either parent's income. In 2001, about 85 percent of fathers and over 50 percent of mothers with children under the age of six worked.¹¹ By 2010, a projected 85 percent of the workforce will be parents.¹²

Although families financially benefit from two incomes, they suffer the additional and growing cost of child care. With 72 percent of women with children between the ages of

three and five working, the cost of child care nationwide is significant.¹³ According to a study sponsored by the National Child Care Association, 60 percent of working families with children under the age of five paid for licensed or informal child care.¹⁴ And as the demand for child care has risen, so has the cost. The general cost of child care has been increasing at an average annual rate of 7 percent, which is higher than price increases caused by inflation.¹⁵ In 2001, Americans spent an estimated \$38 billion on early care and education for children under the age of five.¹⁶

MODELS FOR UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL

States around the country are experimenting with preschool programs, some of which are universal, others of which are more limited. Lessons can be drawn from these states' experiences and used to design a model for a nationwide universal preschool program.

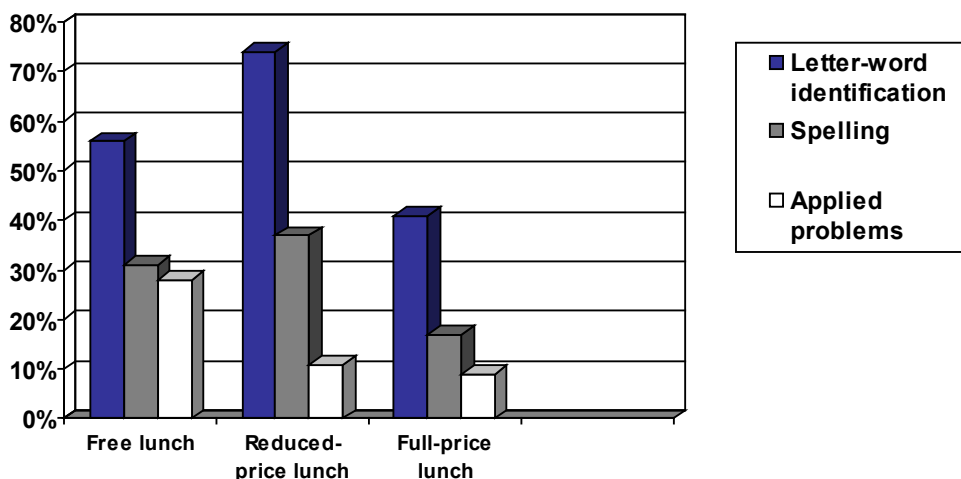
Oklahoma

Oklahoma's program began with a pilot program for needy four-year olds in 1980. In 1990, it broadened to include children in Head Start; and then in 1998 it expanded to encompass all four-year olds statewide. With 91 percent of all Oklahoma's school districts participating in the preschool program, Oklahoma far outstrips any other state in access to preschool.¹⁷ In addition to such extensive access to preschool, Oklahoma also provides a model for teachers in other programs. Oklahoma's preschool teachers are both well-qualified—required to hold college degrees as well as certification in early childhood education—and better paid than most preschool teachers elsewhere, with salaries comparable to K–12 teachers.¹⁸

Oklahoma's universal preschool system is run primarily through its public school systems, with some local districts collaborating with Head Start programs and other community-based organizations to provide service. Regardless of who provides the service, standards that apply to K–12 classes also apply to Oklahoma's preschool classes. Although quality standards are consistent throughout the program, Oklahoma chose not to require a standard curriculum. Programs throughout the state have the freedom to pursue the curriculum they choose. Unifying the diverse curricula is the mandated use of a state report card that rates children's achievement in both academic and social skills.

Research suggests the program is working well. In 2003, a study was conducted in Tulsa, Oklahoma, to determine the impact of Oklahoma's universal preschool program on students. Researchers concluded that “all racial and ethnic groups benefit from the Tulsa pre-K program.” Furthermore, children from all economic backgrounds also benefited from the program. The study focused on three tests that were administered to gauge advancement: letter-word identification, spelling, and applied problems. (See Figure 1.) The study showed that preschool programs improved skills necessary for prereading, prewriting, and prenumeracy across race and economic groups.¹⁹

Figure 1. Effects of Tulsa’s Universal Preschool Program, Test Score Gains by Students’ Subsidized Lunch Status



Source: William Gormley, Jr., Ted Gayer, Deborah Phillips, and Brittany Dawson, “The Effects of Oklahoma’s Universal Pre-K Program on School Readiness: An Executive Summary,” Center for Research on Children in the United States, November 2004, available online at http://www.crocus.georgetown.edu/reports/executive_summary_11_04.pdf.

When initially approved, Oklahoma’s preschool program was to be funded by reassigning the funds of other education programs. By the time it passed, however, education appropriations had increased by 6.5 percent and the Oklahoma K–12 enrollment was in a downward turn. As a result of circumstances, no education programs suffered from the preschool program’s creation.²⁰ Since such positive circumstances cannot always be expected, Oklahoma’s dilution funding method is not an ideal model for other states.

Georgia

Georgia, which funds its universal preschool program by tapping the state lottery revenue, began providing preschool in 1993 and expanded its program to universal access in 1995.²¹ Georgia’s initiative has been a boon for access to preschool for all four-year olds, with enrollment nearing 70 percent.²²

Rather than integrate their preschool program into the public school system as Oklahoma did, Georgia’s preschool is offered through a varied network. This network includes public schools, private and nonprofit preschool programs, and Head Start agencies. All programs are required to meet health and safety standards; and teachers are required to have either a Child Development Associate credential or a degree in early childhood education. In addition, programs must use “scientifically based school readiness curricula.” Programs that exceed basic requirements are awarded additional funding.²³

A 2001 study of the impact Georgia's universal preschool has had on children found that over 80 percent of students who had participated in a preschool program rated average or better on third-grade readiness when compared to national norms. And in 2003, a more recent study found that low-income children in Georgia's universal preschool program, who began by scoring below the national average on letter- and word-recognition tests, ended up beginning kindergarten at levels that were above the national average.²⁴

Arkansas

Established in 1991, Arkansas's policy is the most comprehensive in the nation at directing the regulation and quality of its preschool program. Unfortunately, Arkansas does not have the means to meet the needs of all of its children and is ranked thirty-seventh in access for four-year olds.

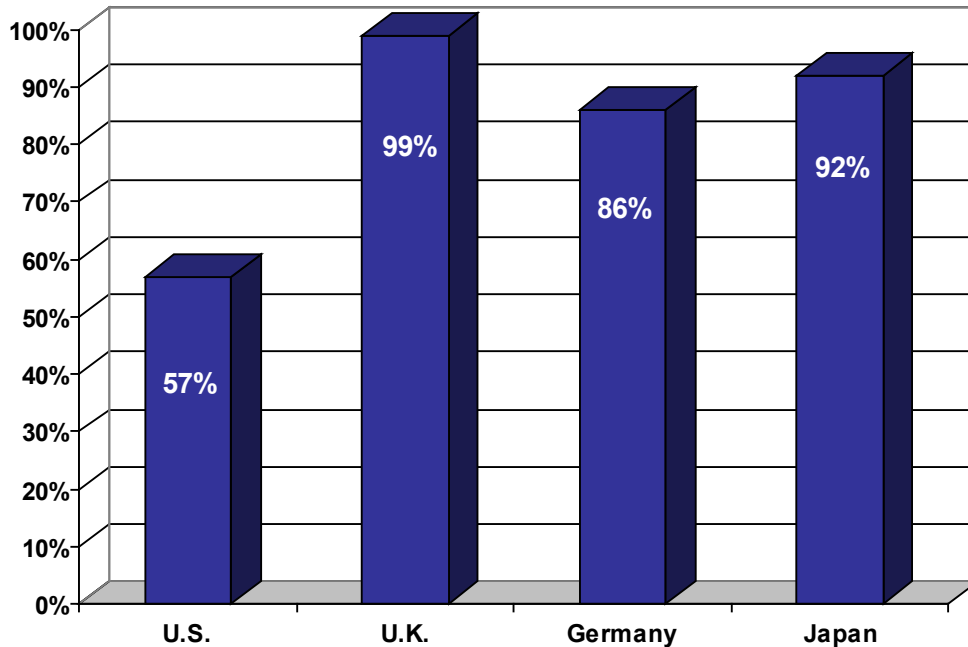
Under the Arkansas preschool program design, public schools operate most of the programs. However, some funding is also given directly to Head Start agencies and private child care providers. Since 2001, the program has derived a portion of funding from 80 percent of the revenue received through an excise tax on package beer. Additional funding for the program was increased in both the 2004–05 as well as the 2005–06 academic years.²⁵

An evaluation of the Core Knowledge (CK) curriculum for three- and four-year olds applied in Southeast Arkansas found a significant improvement in children's academic and social performance from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. The evaluation included those students who were enrolled in the CK program at the time of the evaluation in 2005 as well as students who had participated in the program in the past two years. Among those areas assessed in which the children improved significantly were: rhyme awareness, identifying ABC uppercase, beginning sounds, letter sounds, name writing, quantitative concepts, story recall, and applied problems. In most of these areas, the children who had participated in CK had improved at a great rate than those who had not been CK participants. And evidence from the assessments of those children who had participated in CK two years indicated that they were continuing to benefit from their CK experience.²⁶

International Programs

Industrialized countries around the world have embraced universal preschool; many have done so as a means to address poor performance in grade school. While only 57 percent of four-year olds are enrolled in center-based programs in the United States, at least 90 percent of four-year olds are enrolled in preschool programs in France, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom; Germany has an enrollment rate of 86 percent.²⁷

Figure 2. International Comparison of Four-Year Olds Enrolled in Center-Based Preschool Programs



Source: Anindita Sen, Lisette Partelow, and David C. Miller, “Comparative Indicators of Education in the United States and Other G8 Countries: 2004,” National Center for Education Statistics, February 2005, p. 27, available online at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2005021>.

Although France’s free, public education has included preschool since 1881,²⁸ it initiated an expansion of that program when the rate of students failing in schools began to increase. France undertook this expansion after the results of a government survey indicated that every year of preschool attended by students prior to entering kindergarten further reduced their rate of failure in school.²⁹ France is one of several countries to determine that preschool education has positive long-term impacts children’s performance in school as well as on society and acted on that information. Studies from Britain, Germany, Sweden, and Japan all support France’s findings that well-established, high-quality preschool programs provide long-term benefits for both children and societies.³⁰

Preschool programs around the world vary in curriculum and practice, but the successful ones share several common traits. Programs with the most positive results are consistently found to be in countries with an established national policy of universal preschool with built-in means to monitor and enforce quality.³¹ Among other factors in the equation of quality, qualified preschool teachers are attracted in Western Europe by being paid on par with other elementary teachers and receiving comparable benefits.

The United States falls short in this comparison, with no national policy on preschool or any efficient means of monitoring and enforcing the quality of programs that are funded by the federal government. The National Impact Study of Head Start looked at the effi-

cacy of Head Start, which is the largest federally funded preschool program in the United States and is targeted to children from low-income families. It found only “modest gains from one year in the program.”³² Most state-funded targeted programs have even lower standards than Head Start and offer considerably less, from which one may deduce that gains made by children in these programs would be even less than those in Head Start.

UNIVERSAL PUBLIC PRESCHOOL VERSUS TARGETED PRESCHOOL

In the debate over federally sponsored preschool programs, one of the key issues is whether such programs should be universal or targeted. Universal programs provide either free or affordable preschool to anyone interested, while targeted programs have income eligibility requirements and only provide preschool for those who qualify. Despite fewer upfront costs, the benefits of targeted programs fall far short to those of universal programs. Ultimately, studies have illustrated consistently that universal preschool programs are more cost effective, particularly in terms of academic success and long-term benefits to society.

The Middle Class Needs Preschool, Too

One of the greatest misconceptions of preschool is that it only benefits low-income children. While access to preschool does have a tremendous impact on the academic success of low-income children, studies suggest that, contrary to common belief, middle-income children also make significant academic gains by attending preschool. And many middle-class children do not have access to the quality preschool programs necessary to give them an academic boost.³³ According to some studies there are no more, and at times fewer, early care and education programs in middle-class neighborhoods than in low-income neighborhoods. Surprisingly, programs that are available in middle-class neighborhoods are frequently of lower quality than those in low-income neighborhoods.³⁴

A significant number of students from middle-class families fail academically. According to researchers from the RAND Corporation, half of all children who repeat a grade and half of all students who do not graduate from high school come from families who are in the middle-class.³⁵ Universal preschool will provide the middle-class with quality preschool programs to help their children reach their full potential.

Targeted Preschool Is Politically Weak and Underfunded

Universal programs are more resilient to the changing winds of politics than targeted programs and, subsequently, more successful at maintaining their funding. This is largely due to the fact that universal programs impact the entire society, whereas targeted programs focus on sectors of society.³⁶ Politicians fighting for preschool funding have a stronger argument against other interest groups vying for funding if the program they support broadly impacts society.

Furthermore, most targeted programs are directed at low-income children. With a focus on the poor, targeted preschool programs are frequently dismissed as welfare programs and the adage of “beggars cannot be picky” is applied to excuse low funding and poor quality. This correlation can even be found in the quality of different Head Start programs, which target low-income children. A study found that Head Start classroom quality was higher when the children’s families had higher incomes and there were fewer minorities.³⁷ With few people willing to stand up and fight for the funding necessary to provide the high quality programs required to have the positive impacts sought, the programs remain substandard. By incorporating children from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds into the programs, the people affected will expand and demand higher standards.

Targeted Preschool Is Less Likely to Be Unionized, Resulting in High Turnover of Teachers

With multiple organizations and agencies undertaking targeted preschool programs, the programs lack consistency. This inconsistency across programs includes everything from the quality of the curriculum to the wages and qualifications of the teachers. Qualified teachers are essential for an effective program, but they’re difficult to find and retain when the offered wages and benefits are negligible. Under a universal program teachers are much more likely to be unionized, which would help provide conditions conducive to remaining in a position.

The state of current preschool programs in the United States is reflected by the wages of its teachers, who make as little as \$8 an hour with no benefits.³⁸ This low pay discourages qualified candidates from applying, leaving programs little choice except to hire those applicants with lower qualifications—some preschools do not even require a two-year degree. With low pay, poor or nonexistent benefits, and high turnover rates, there is little incentive to be a preschool teacher in the United States’ current system. Preschool teachers who work in the universal preschool programs of France and Sweden are paid salaries equivalent to those of primary school teachers and receive similar benefits. By adding a universal preschool program with a pay scale comparable to the current pay scales of K–12 teachers, turnover rates among preschool teachers would decrease and the quality of applicants for teaching positions would increase.

Targeted Preschool Provides Less Economic Integration

Universality increases the chances of low-income children to attend preschools with middle-income children—a combination that provides the most significant improvement in gaining skills.³⁹ Evidence continues to amass on the advantages of having children from different socioeconomic backgrounds together in classrooms, and targeted programs are being criticized for their narrow access. A recent small-scale study found that low-income children who participated in an economically integrated program had significantly larger language gains than similar children in a program that only served economically disadvantaged children.⁴⁰ This study tracks with a large body of research

finding that low-income students perform better in economically integrated primary and secondary schools.⁴¹ Since most targeted preschool programs in the United States are based on income, the children participating in the programs come from very similar socioeconomic backgrounds and miss out on the benefits provided by economic integration.

Targeted Preschool Misses Eligible Children

By providing access to everyone, universal programs avoid many of the pitfalls suffered by targeted programs. One of the key flaws of targeted programs is their failure to reach all of the children they intend to assist. This failure frequently arises due to complicated eligibility requirements. In many cases, families do not realize that their children are eligible, or their financial situation shifts so regularly that they are not consistently eligible. In cases of fluctuating incomes, programs are faced with the choice of either interrupting the children's education or permitting children to continue participating, even when financially ineligible, thereby closing those slots to other eligible children.⁴² In addition to logistical complications, many low-income targeted programs suffer from being stigmatized as "welfare programs," which discourages some families from applying. Without eligibility requirements, universal programs allow children from all incomes—even those with fluctuating incomes—to participate consistently in programs. Universal programs also prevent the development of stigmas due to their diverse participation. That diverse participation also promotes higher quality programs and greater public support.

DESIGN PROPOSAL

The Federal Role

In order to aid states in developing high quality universal preschool programs, the federal government should provide funding incentives for state programs that meet federally established standards. Although the details of each state's program would be determined locally, based on communities' needs, the federal government would establish guidelines for health, safety, and quality as well as enforcement for those guidelines. Federal guidelines would be modeled after those currently employed by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) to grade state's programs, which include having comprehensive early learning standards; qualified teachers and assistant teachers, including specialized training in preschool; continued in-service training of at least fifteen hours a year; class sizes no larger than twenty students and a staff-child ratio of one to ten or better. Programs also should provide screening and referrals for vision, hearing, and health; at least one meal; and have site visits for quality control. Local governments also would be encouraged to consider their public school system as their "prime sponsor." By integrating the preschool program into the public school system, the program would be more accountable for quality, equally accessible to all children, and financially secure.

If not integrated into the public school system, the preschool program would resemble that of charter schools, which have a poor record of accountability. In its official evaluation of federally funded charter schools, the Department of Education stated that “many charter school authorizers lack the capacity to adequately oversee charter school operations, often lack authority to implement formal sanctions, and rarely invoke the authority they do have to revoke or not renew a charter.”⁴³ And in a report released in January 2005, the Government Accountability Office criticizes the Department of Education for not having an evaluation of the performance of federal charter schools.⁴⁴ High quality is so essential to the success of a universal preschool program that accountability must be a primary consideration in its design.

As part of the public school system, the preschool program would follow the basic regulations of the K–12 program. Like K–12 teachers, preschool teachers would have the opportunity to unionize. Unionizing would provide teachers with the leverage necessary to ensure good working conditions and competitive wages, which would decrease turnover among teachers. A consistent staff is an important element in a high quality preschool program. The preschool program also would be democratically controlled within the public school system, eliminating the risk of bias from outside factors. And parents still would have the option of sending their children to private preschool if they desire a particular type of education—just as 10 percent of parents send their children to private schools for their elementary and secondary years.

Finally, by tying the preschool program to the public school system the government will demonstrate its commitment to creating an enduring program. Public support for the K–12 education program is so widespread that both political parties have consistently supported it historically.⁴⁵ If not incorporated into the existing, stable public school system, preschool funding will be at risk with every variable political wind.

Funding Design

Since states independently have pursued preschool programs for well over a decade, each state is at a different stage in the development of a universal preschool program. With disparate levels of development across the nation, each state will require a different level of federal assistance. Those without any substantial groundwork to establish a preschool program would benefit from an initial federal incentive to get started. Those with the groundwork but still improving access and quality will need varying amounts of federal funding to meet federal standards of quality and access.

The initial incentive from the federal government would address the start-up cost of building a universal preschool program. To qualify for such funding, states would be required to provide, and to have approved, a proposal outlining their preschool program’s design. Most proposals for universal preschool recommend that state committees be created to design and organize these fledgling programs.⁴⁶

Once start-up costs are taken care of, states will need to direct funding to meet quality standards and provide universal access to their programs. Some states have used their K–12 budgeting formula successfully to determine an appropriate preschool budget. This method has proved effective in keeping pace with preschool population shifts and could be adopted by other states.⁴⁷ To help states reach federal standards of quality and access, federal funds could be offered in terms of matching state funds. One proposal suggested that states received \$4 of federal money for every \$1 they spend on their preschool program.⁴⁸ A design that uses matching state funds for federal funds would ensure that federal funds are augmenting preschool budgets, not merely replacing state funds. The four-to-one match could provide a powerful incentive for states to adopt programs that comply with federal guidelines for quality.

COSTS AND BENEFITS OF UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

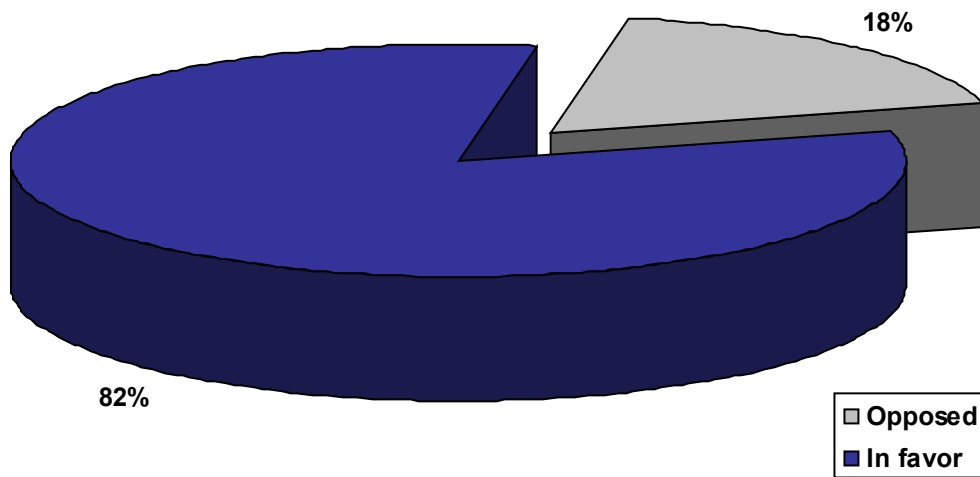
Most of the successful universal programs in industrialized countries have diverse funding methods. Many use a combination of federal and local funds. The Committee for Economic Development (CED) estimates that providing universal preschool for every four-year old would cost just under \$36 billion a year.⁴⁹ That number was reached by assuming 100 percent participation by children in a full-day program that would last the entire school year. New funding required to implement this universal preschool for four-year olds would be \$13.6 billion.⁵⁰ States would match federal funds with their own, dispersing the overall cost between the federal and state governments.

The \$13.6 billion price tag is large, but the benefits will be even larger. Studies suggest that universal preschool provides more long-term benefits to children and society than targeted programs, whose benefits seem to be more short-term. Long-term benefits include higher academic achievement, a greater high school graduation rate, better health for participants, lower crime rates, and less dependency on welfare. These benefits translate into government savings of \$13,000 to \$19,000 per child above the cost of sending that child to preschool.⁵¹

PUBLIC OPINION

Public support for universal preschool is now a nationwide phenomenon that has been documented in many polls. In a 2001 Hart Research/National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) poll, 87 percent of the public supported (64 percent *strongly* supported) creating state government programs to make preschool universally available to all parents who wish to enroll their children.⁵² Similarly, in a 2002 Gallup/Phi Delta Kappa poll, 82 percent of the public said they favored making preschool available as part of the public school system.⁵³ And, in a 2003 Lake Sosin Perry/PEN poll, early childhood education actually topped a list of nine education areas—including teacher training and pay and reducing class size—that the public wanted protected from budget cutbacks.⁵⁴ Universal preschool is clearly a program that is now on the short list of the public’s education priorities.

Figure 3. Public Support for Offering Universal Preschool in the Public School System



Source: Lowell C. Rose and Alec M. Gallup, “The 34th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public’s Attitudes toward the Public Schools,” Phi Delta Kappa, September 2002, available online at http://www.pdkmembers.org/e-GALLUP/kpoll_pdfs/pdkpoll34_2002.pdf.

Proponents of universal preschool recently did suffer a setback in the polls in one state, but the result does not appear to have national implications. On June 6, California voters rejected Proposition 82, a ballot measure proposing to tax individuals making over \$400,000 per year and couples making over \$800,000 per year to fund a universal preschool program, with only 39 percent supporting it. Early polls in January 2006 showed two-thirds of voters supporting such a measure and earlier California polls showed even larger majorities in favor of the general idea of providing universal preschool. But as controversy over Rob Reiner’s roles as both creator of Proposition 82 and chairman of the First 5 California Children and Families Commission grew, support for Proposition 82 dropped to just over 50 percent by May.⁵⁵ With California facing budget deficits, opponents of Proposition 82 ran a campaign against tax increases, while instigating fear that funding for a universal preschool program in California would lead to a reduction of funding for K–12 programs within the state. In the end, the Proposition 82 opponents were successful, but it was in spite of, not because of, public support for the basic idea of universal preschool programs, which remained solid.

CONCLUSION

Recognition of preschool’s importance in the academic development and success of children is rapidly growing, with new studies on its impact being released on a regular basis. States are setting up task forces and committees and polling citizens to determine the best way to implement a program that will help them reap the benefits of preschool access. The benefits of preschool reach beyond academic success, though, and into society. Studies illustrate the positive impact of preschool education on reducing incarceration rates

and lowering welfare dependency, among others. With extensive evidence demonstrating the benefits of preschool education and interest from states in pursuing widespread access to preschool, the time is ripe for the federal government to step in and help them accomplish that.

By participating and providing financial assistance and guidance, the federal government will be in the position to ensure that every state consistently offers its children a high-quality preschool program. Federal oversight will provide national quality standards and the means to enforce those standards. And as part of the public school system, the preschool program will not be as vulnerable to political whims. Political momentum is behind this movement for universal preschool and action needs to be taken now in order to turn it into a tangible program from which all will benefit.

NOTES

1. Lisa Snell, "Push for Universal Preschool," *School Reform News*, The Heartland Institute, October 1, 2005, available online at <http://www.heartland.org/Article.cfm?artId=17816>.
2. "Governors and Pre-K," *Washington Post*, May 30, 2006, p. A6.
3. Snell, "Push for Universal Preschool."
4. David Kirp, "After the Bell Curve," *New York Times Magazine*, July 23, 2006, p. 15.
5. "Early School Readiness," *Child Trends DataBank*, 1999, available online at http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org/pdf/7_PDF.pdf.
6. W. Steven Barnett, Kirsty Brown, and Rima Shore, "The Universal vs. Targeted Debate: Should the United States Have Preschool for All?" *Preschool Policy Matters* 6 (April 2004): 5.
7. Debra Ackerman and W. Steven Barnett, "Prepared for Kindergarten: What Does 'Readiness' Mean?" National Institute for Early Education Research, March 2005, p. 7, available online at <http://nieer.org/resources/policyreports/report5.pdf>.
8. Ibid.
9. Sarane Boocock, "Early Childhood Programs in Other Nations: Goals and Outcomes," *The Future of Children* 5, no. 3 (Winter 1995), available online at http://www.futureofchildren.org/usr_doc/vol5no3ART5.pdf.
10. Karen Schulman, "Overlooked Benefits of Prekindergarten," National Institute for Early Education Research, March 2005, pp. 1, available online at <http://nieer.org/resources/policyreports/report6.pdf>.
11. M. Cubed, "The National Economic Impacts of the Child Care Sector," The National Child Care Association, Fall 2002, pp. i, available online at <http://www.nccanet.org/NCCA%20Impact%20Study.pdf>.
12. Ibid., p. ii.
13. Ibid., p. i.
14. Ibid., p. 4.

15. Ibid., p. 5.
16. Ibid.
17. William Gormley, Ted Gayer, Deborah Phillips, and Brittany Dawson, "The Effects of Oklahoma's Universal Pre-K Program on School Readiness: An Executive Summary," Center for Research on Children in the U.S., November 2004, p. 2, available online at http://www.crocus.georgetown.edu/reports/executive_summary_11_04.pdf.
18. William T. Gormley, Jr., and Deborah Phillips, "The Effects of Universal Pre-K in Oklahoma: Research Highlights and Policy Implications," Center for Research on Children in the United States, October 2003, p. 5, available online at http://www.crocus.georgetown.edu/reports/effects_of_universal_prek_wp2.pdf.
19. William T. Gormley, Jr., et al., "The Effects of Universal Pre-K on Cognitive Development," *Developmental Psychology* 41, no. 6 (2005): 882.
20. William T. Gormley, Jr., and Deborah Phillips, "The Effects of Universal Pre-K in Oklahoma," p. 5.
21. W. Steven Barnett, et al., *The State of Preschool: 2005 State Preschool Yearbook* (New Brunswick, N.J.: National Institute for Early Education and Research, 2005), p. 58.
22. Ibid., p. 5.
23. "Universal Preschool," Democratic Leadership Council, July 20, 2006, available online at http://www.ppionline.org/ndol/ndol_ci.cfm?kaid=139&subid=273&contentid=253433.
24. William T. Gormley, Jr., et al., "The Effects of Universal Pre-K on Cognitive Development," p. 873.
25. W. Steven Barnett, et al., *The State of Preschool*, p. 46.
26. Robert H. Bradley, "Evaluation of the Core Knowledge Program in Arkansas," Core Knowledge Foundation, November 28, 2005, available online at http://www.coreknowledge.org/CK/Preschool/CK_Eval_Rpt_AR2005.pdf.
27. Anindita Sen, Lisette Partelow, and David C. Miller, "Comparative Indicators of Education in the United States and Other G8 Countries: 2004," National Center for Education Statistics, February 18, 2005, p. 27, available online at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2005021>.
28. Sherlie Svestka, "Financing Preschool for All Children," ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education, December 1995, p. 1, available online at <http://www.ericdigests.org/1996-3/children.htm>.
29. Sarane Boocock, "Early Childhood Programs in Other Nations," p. 100.
30. Ibid., p.109.
31. Ibid.
32. W. Steven Barnett and Bruce Fuller, "Universal or Targeted Preschool?" Education Sector, May 2006, available online at http://www.educationsector.org/analysis/analysis_show.htm?doc_id=374565.
33. Karen Schulman and W. Steven Barnett, "The Benefits of Prekindergarten for Middle-Income Children," National Institute for Early Education Research, March 2005, p. 2, available online at <http://nieer.org/resources/policyreports/report3.pdf>.
34. Ibid.

35. Lynn Karoly and James Bigelow, "Benefits of Preschool Come with Every Dollar," *Los Angeles Times*, April 26, 2006, available online at http://www.preschoolcalifornia.org/media_center/page.jsp?itemID=28841897.
36. W. Steven Barnett, Kirsty Brown, and Rima Shore, "The Universal vs. Targeted Debate: Should the United States Have Preschool for All?" National Institute for Early Education Research, April 2004, p. 12, available online at <http://nieer.org/resources/policybriefs/6.pdf>.
37. Janet Currie, "Early Childhood Education Programs," *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 15, no. 2 (2001): 228.
38. John Merrow, "European Preschools Should Embarrass USA," *USA Today*, July 17, 2002.
39. Richard Kahlenberg, "Universal Preschool in California: Why David Brooks Is Wrong," The Century Foundation, June 5, 2006, available online at <http://www.tcf.org/list.asp?type=NC&pubid=1326>.
40. W. Steven Barnett, Kirsty Brown, and Rima Shore, "The Universal vs. Targeted Debate," p. 10. See also Carolyn Moureau, "Learning in Mixed Company: Study Shows Low-Income Preschoolers Learn Better, Faster Alongside More Affluent Peers," *Hartford Courant*, October 19, 2002, p. B1.
41. Richard Kahlenberg, *All Together Now: Creating Middle-Class Schools through Public School Choice* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Press, 2001).
42. W. Steven Barnett and Bruce Fuller, "Universal or Targeted Preschool?"
43. "Accountability Proves to Be Elusive," Charter Schools. National Education Association. August 22, 2006, available online at <http://www.nea.org/charter/index.html>.
44. "Charter Schools," National Education Association, August 22, 2006, available online at <http://www.nea.org/charter/index.html>.
45. Diana Stone, "Funding the Future: States' Approaches to Pre-K Finance," Pre-K Now, February 2006, p. 11, available online at http://www.preknow.org/documents/FundingtheFuture_Feb2006.pdf.
46. Eric Rhodes, "Universal Preschool," The Century Foundation, March 28, 2000, available online at <http://www.equaleducation.org/publications.asp?pubid=291>.
47. Diana Stone, "Funding the Future."
48. Eric Rhodes, "Universal Preschool."
49. *The Economic Promise of Investing in High-Quality Preschool: Using Early Education to Improve Economic Growth and the Fiscal Sustainability of States and the Nation* (Washington, D.C.: Committee for Economic Development, 2006), p.41, available online at http://www.ced.org/docs/report/report_prek_econpromise.pdf.
50. Ibid.
51. Isabell V. Sawhill, "Kids Need an Early Start: Universal Preschool Education May Be the Best Investment Americans Can Make in Our Children's Education—and Our Nation's Future," *Blueprint* (Fall 1999).
52. National Poll conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates/Market Strategies, November 29–December 13, 2001, available online at <http://nieer.org/resources/research/poll802/nationalsummary.pdf>.

53. Lowell C. Rose and Alec M. Gallup, “The 34th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public’s Attitudes toward the Public Schools,” Phi Delta Kappa, September 2002, available online at http://www.pdkmembers.org/e-GALLUP/kpoll_pdfs/pdkpoll34_2002.pdf.
54. “Demanding Quality PUBLIC Education in Tough Economic Times: What Voters Want from Elected Leaders,” Public Education Network/Education Week, 1003, available online at http://www.publiceducation.org/pdf/Publications/national_poll/2003_poll_report.pdf.
55. Seema Mehta, “Voters Reject Preschool Tax Measure,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 7, 2006.

THE CENTURY FOUNDATION
41 EAST 70TH STREET
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10021