



GEEARS

GEORGIA EARLY EDUCATION
ALLIANCE FOR READY STUDENTS

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR EARLY EDUCATION INVESTMENTS

GEEARS' mission is to inspire and provide leadership for a statewide movement on quality early learning and healthy development for all children ages birth to five. Our vision is, by 2020, all students will enter kindergarten prepared to succeed and on a path to read to learn by third grade.

We can build a strong workforce pipeline for Georgia, but we have to start early.

- The foundation of skills needed in school and the workforce is built during a child's first five years.
- Young children's brains develop 700 neural connections that support learning and skills every second through the interaction of genes and a child's environment and experiences. These connections build the foundation through which all future learning, behavior, and health depend.

Investments in early education programs yield short- and long-term returns for Georgia:

- The early care and education industry generates \$4.1 billion of economic activity in the state each year.
- The availability of childcare in Georgia supports annual parent earnings of at least \$13.6 billion.
- Every \$1 invested in high-quality early education saves, on average, \$7 down the road as a result of lower demand for social services, reduced crime rates and increased tax revenues.

Early childhood investments address three top problems commonly cited by the business community:

- Lack of qualified employees - Early learning improves employee productivity today and builds the foundation of skills for tomorrow's workforce.
- Reactive budgeting - Early education helps reduce taxpayer expenses for special education, crime and other societal problems.
- Too few customers - Early learning leads to higher incomes, creating a stronger consumer base.

Georgia business needs employees who are job-ready and well-prepared but the current system is not providing them.

- In 2011, 68% of Georgia's fourth graders tested below proficient reading levels and 63% of Georgia's fourth graders tested below proficient math levels. Reading and math skills are essential building blocks for a well-prepared workforce.
- Seventy-five percent of students who are not reading at grade level by third grade will never catch up to their peers.



Children who receive high-quality early education begin school ready to succeed.



Children who begin school ready to succeed are more likely to read at grade level by 3rd grade.



Children who read at grade level by 3rd grade are more likely to graduate from high school.



Children who graduate high school are more likely to go to college and enter the job market prepared.



Employable, tax-paying citizens are critical to a vital economy.

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WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT EARLY EDUCATION

LEARN MORE.

- Sign up for the GEEARS email list to receive updates.
- Visit high-quality early learning programs in your area.
- Join state and local organizations working to advance high-quality early childhood programs.

TAKE ACTION.

- Contact your local legislators.
- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.
- Participate in local events sponsored by GEEARS and other early childhood advocates.

SPREAD THE WORD.

- Encourage your colleagues to get involved and support early education.
- Arrange for GEEARS to speak to your professional association, faith community, business or civic organization.
- Talk to your employees and share information with other business leaders about the importance of high-quality early education.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE.

- Read to your children.
- Enroll your children in high-quality early learning programs and encourage others to do the same.
- If you own a business, release a statement on the importance of early learning.

PROMOTE GOOD PRACTICES.

- Encourage business organizations and other networks you are a member of to adopt positions in support of public investments for high-quality early learning programs.
- Provide information on the importance of early learning to your employees and customers.
- Ask your childcare provider to enroll in Georgia's Quality Rated program.

For more information, please contact Mindy Binderman, Executive Director at mbinderman@gears.org.

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