



**GEEARS**  
GEORGIA EARLY EDUCATION  
ALLIANCE FOR READY STUDENTS

## THE IMPORTANCE OF HIGH-QUALITY EARLY EDUCATION

**Early education benefits children, their families and their communities. From improved academic outcomes to the economic savings to schools and states, the benefits of high-quality early education are irrefutable.**

**Science has proven that early experiences and education shape the brain.** Early childhood education and experiences have lasting impacts on later learning, behavior and health. Differences in the size of children's vocabulary first appear at 18 months of age, depending on whether they were born into a family with high or low education and income. By three years old, children with college educated parents have vocabularies two to three times larger than those whose parents did not graduate high school. In the first few years of a child's life, 700 new neural connections are formed every second through the interaction of genes and a baby's environment and experiences. These connections build the brain's foundation upon which all learning, behavior and health depend.

**Children who receive high quality early education are more likely to graduate high school, attend college and are better equipped for the workforce.** The first step to ensuring we have a highly skilled workforce to compete in the global economy is improving early education. The foundation of skills needed in school and the workforce is built during a child's first five years.

**Continuing support for early education has both short and long-term economic benefits for Georgia.** The early care and education industry is an important part of Georgia's economy. It creates over 73,000 jobs and 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, according to a study commissioned by the state's Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL). Research conducted by Dr. James Heckman, Nobel Prize winning economist at The University of Chicago, proves that investing in early childhood education produces the greatest return on investment. Early education yields a significant long-term return on investment through increased workforce productivity and reduced societal costs of welfare and crime. 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.

**The quality of early education a child receives in the first five years greatly impacts their future.** A recent study by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina found that two-thirds of Georgia's infants and toddlers in center-based care across the state are in centers of unacceptably low quality. Families require access to affordable, high quality childcare and early learning so they can go to work every day and contribute to Georgia's economy while their children are gaining skills that will prepare them for school success, and later, Georgia's workforce.

**High-quality care and early childhood education services help ensure that even the most at-risk students arrive at kindergarten ready to learn.** A large body of research shows that children who live in poverty and have access to high quality early education are more developed cognitively, socially, emotionally and academically than children who did not receive similar education. Children who enter school ready to succeed are more likely to graduate from high school, go on to college and be productive members of the workforce. Georgia's children are falling below - or barely meeting - the basic standard in reading by the end of 3rd grade. 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. Significant gaps in access and quality must be addressed if the state is to excel in preparing children for learning in grades K-12. Children who attend high quality early education are more likely to read at grade level and be on a path to read to learn by 3rd grade.

### Contact GEEARS

Mindy Binderman, Executive Director - 404-367-2075 or [mbinderman@gears.org](mailto:mbinderman@gears.org)  
Twitter: @GEEARS Facebook: Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students



[WWW.GEEARS.ORG](http://WWW.GEEARS.ORG)



**GEEARS**  
GEORGIA EARLY EDUCATION  
ALLIANCE FOR READY STUDENTS

## 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](mailto:mbinderman@gears.org).

Facebook: Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students

Twitter: @GEEARS



[WWW.GEEARS.ORG](http://WWW.GEEARS.ORG)