

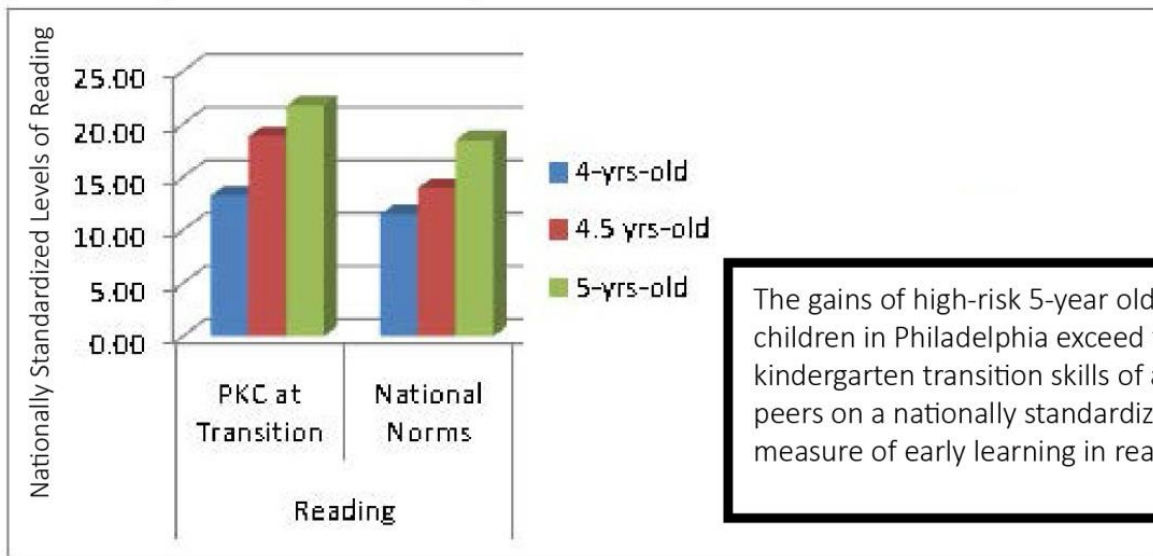
# High Quality Early Childhood Education as a Foundation for K-12

Any meaningful conversation about improvements in K-12 must take into account the little-discussed reality that most of a child’s social-emotional and academic capacities are formed in the first five years of life, before they ever get to kindergarten. Anyone who cares about innovative and effective education reform must understand the critical role of the first five years in learning. We must be willing to think outside of the traditional K-12 box to get the most momentum and value from these formative early years.

The importance of the early years is mentioned once in Superintendent Hite’s Action Plan, as an important ingredient in **early literacy**. High quality early childhood education not only improves early literacy, but plays a foundational role in other important student outcomes: **cultivating academic tenacity**, meeting the needs of students in **special education**, and meeting the needs of **English Language Learners**. Moreover, investing in early childhood education can also help capture K-12 **cost savings** and longer term benefits in areas such as **high school graduation** and **crime reduction**.

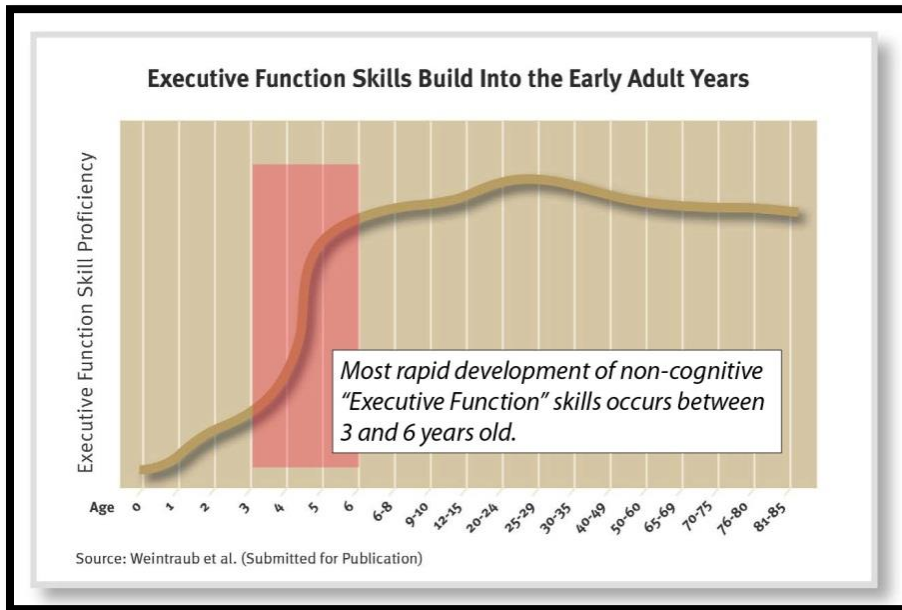
## High Quality Early Education and Early Literacy

Figure 5: PKC Child Reading Competencies vs. National Norm Group at Kindergarten Transition Age



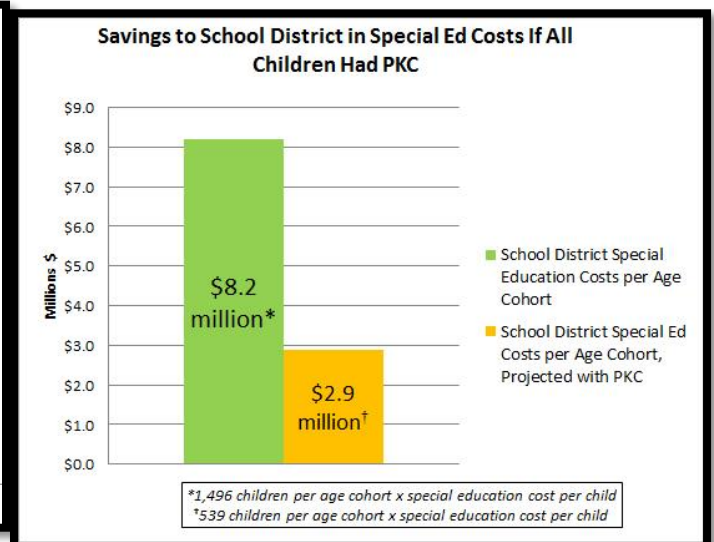
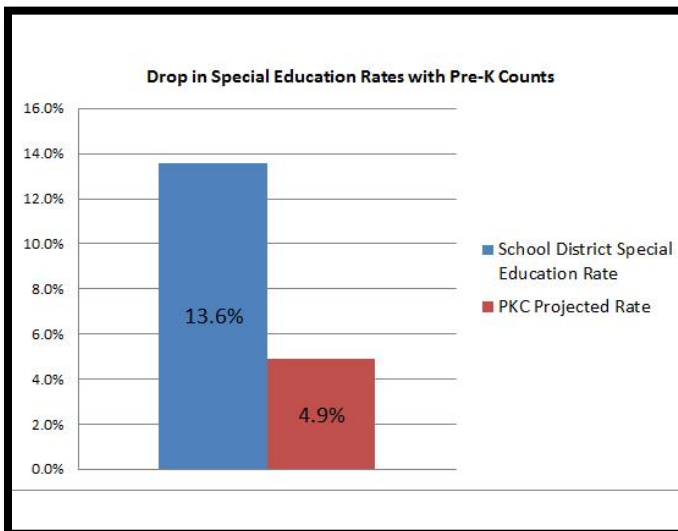
Source: “Research Results of SPECS for Pre-K Counts at School District of Philadelphia: An Independent Authentic Program Evaluation Research Initiative (2005-2009),” SPECS Evaluation Team, University of Pittsburgh

## High Quality Early Education and Academic Tenacity



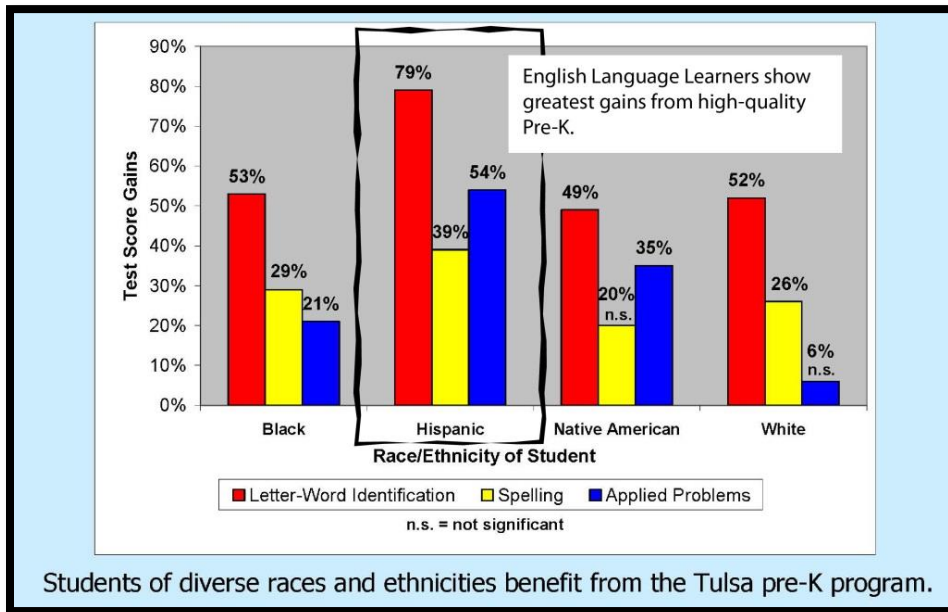
Source: "In Brief: Executive Function: Skills for Life and Learning," Center for the Developing Child, Harvard University

## High Quality Early Education and Special Education Rates



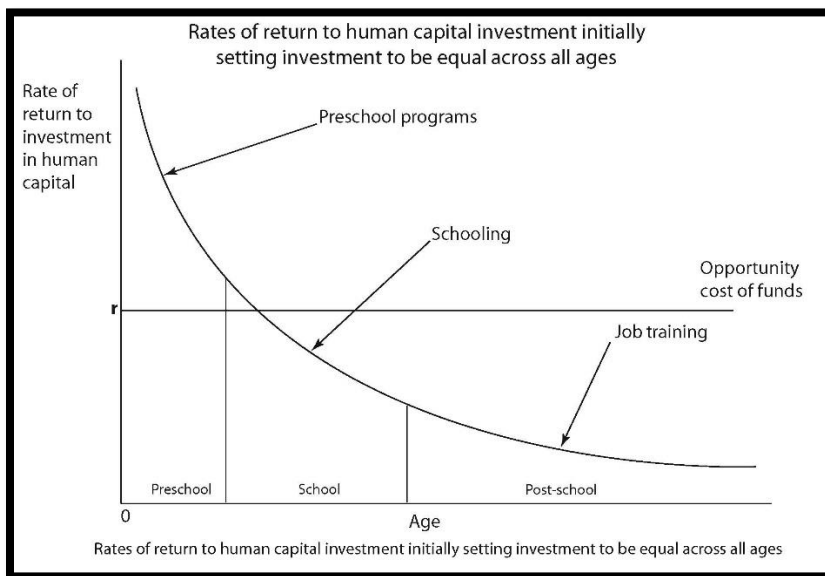
Source: "Research Results of SPECS for Pre-K Counts at School District of Philadelphia: An Independent Authentic Program Evaluation Research Initiative (2005-2009)," SPECS Evaluation Team, University of Pittsburgh

## High Quality Early Education and English Language Learners



Source: "The Effects of Oklahoma's Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program on School Readiness," William T. Gormley, Jr., Center for Research on Children in the U.S., Georgetown University

## High Quality Early Education and Financial Savings

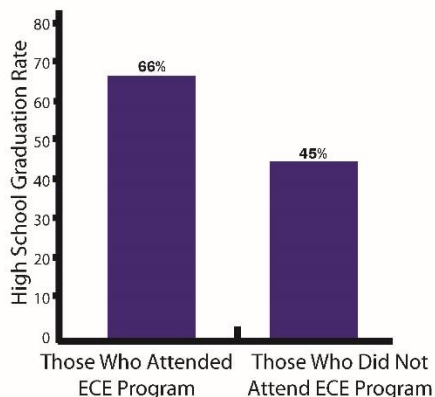


Source: Investing in Disadvantaged Young Children is an Economically Efficient Policy\*, James J. Heckman

## Long-Term Benefits<sup>3</sup> of Investing in High Quality ECE

### Closes the Achievement Gap

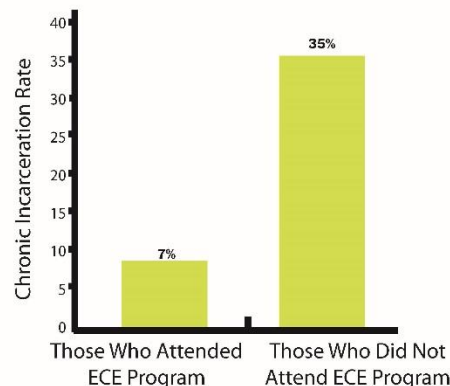
Measured in High School Matriculation Rates



Current Overall Unemployment Rate = 9.6%<sup>4</sup>  
Unemployment Rate: Non-High School Graduates > 15%  
Unemployment Rate: College Graduates = 4.7%

### Reduces Crime

Measured in Chronic Incarceration Rates (more than four arrests by age 27) Relative to Early Education



Cost of Incarceration in Pennsylvania = **\$35,000/ year**<sup>5</sup>  
Tuition at Penn State University = **\$23,000 / year**  
Annual Per Child Public Spending on Early Education = **\$2,722 / year**<sup>6</sup>

1. Risley, Todd R. & Betty Hart. "The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3" excerpted from Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experiences of Young American Children. Baltimore: Brookes Publishing, 1995.  
2. Bagnato, S.J., et al. Quality early learning key to school success: A first phase 3-year program evaluation research report to Pittsburgh's early childhood initiative (ECI). Pittsburgh: Scaling Progress in Early Childhood Settings, 2002.  
3. Schweinhart, L.J., et al. Lifetime Effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool study through Age 40. High/Scope Educational research Foundation. Unpublished Manuscript, 2004.  
4. Davidson, Adam. "Jobless Rate Less Scary for College Grads" from All Things Considered. National Public Radio, 11/24/2010  
5. "Invest in Early Education Now, Spend Less on Prison Later" from Fight Crime: Invest in Kids Pennsylvania.  
6. "Program Reach and County Risk Assessment - State Fiscal Year 2007-2008" Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Department of Education and Public Welfare - Office of Child Development and Early Learning, 2008.

### Additional resources

Harvard Center on the Developing Child, particularly their "In Brief" series on brain development.  
[www.developingchild.harvard.edu/index.php/resources/briefs](http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu/index.php/resources/briefs)

Research by Stephen Bagnato from the University of Pittsburgh on the impact of Pennsylvania high quality pre-school experiences on school readiness.  
[www.education.pitt.edu/people/profiledetails.aspx?f=StephenBagnato&t=Publication](http://www.education.pitt.edu/people/profiledetails.aspx?f=StephenBagnato&t=Publication)

Research and publications by Fight Crime; Invest in Kids on the cost savings of investing in early care and education.  
[www.fightcrime.org/?category\\_name=early-education+pennsylvania](http://www.fightcrime.org/?category_name=early-education+pennsylvania)

The work of Nobel Prize winning University of Chicago Economics Professor James Heckman on the great gains to be had by investing in early and equal development of human potential.  
[www.heckmanequation.org/heckman-equation](http://www.heckmanequation.org/heckman-equation)