

## **Access to High Quality Pre-k Gives All Children the Opportunity to Learn**

**Ready to Learn.** When children arrive to kindergarten ready to learn, they are best able to take advantage of the educational benefits of classroom learning.<sup>1</sup> A child's brain is 90% developed by age 5, making the early years a crucial time in a child's development.<sup>2</sup>

**Pre-k Leads to Success in School.** Children with access to high-quality pre-k are more likely to advance grades and have improved social skills.<sup>3</sup>

**Quality is Key.** Far too many children attend pre-k programs that lack the key elements to ensure they are ready for kindergarten. High-quality pre-k includes developmentally appropriate curriculum, knowledgeable and well-trained program staff and educators, and comprehensive services that support children's overall development.

**Pre-k Works.** The percentage of 4-year-olds with proficient academic and social skills more than tripled after participating in PA Pre-K Counts programs and increased more than six-fold after participating in Head Start Supplemental Assistance Programs in 2012-13.<sup>4</sup>

**Investing in our Kids and our Future.** Education investment must start early, before the achievement gap is too wide and very costly to overcome.<sup>5</sup> However, the amount of public funds currently available for pre-k in PA is only enough to help fewer than 20% of 3- and 4-year-olds access high-quality programs.<sup>6</sup> Since the annual cost can be as high as a family's rent, mortgage or the cost of college tuition, too many families cannot afford high-quality pre-k essential to their children's success.



<sup>1</sup> Hanushek, Eric A., *The Economic Relevance of Early Childhood Development*. Prepare for Life! Raising Awareness for Early Literacy Education. 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Shonkoff, J. & Phillips, D. (Eds.). (2000). *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development, National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

<sup>3</sup> Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning, *Children's Progress Update: Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, 2012-13 and Children's Progress Update: Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program, 2012-13*, June 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning, *Children's Progress Update: Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, 2012-13 and Children's Progress Update: Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program, 2012-13*, June 2013.

<sup>5</sup> J. Reynolds et al., *Age 21 Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Title I Chicago Child-Parent Centers*, Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis 24 (2002).

<sup>6</sup> Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (PPC), *A Smart Choice for a Solid Start: The Case for Pre-k in PA*, February 2014.