

# Get early childhood education right.



Early education programs, proven to work here in Texas with Texas kids, have made possible significant improvements in children's school readiness, particularly when it comes to literacy and math. Texas should capitalize on what we know works, so families and Texans know which programs are delivering results.

Quality early education has been shown to break the cycle of poverty and allow for lifetime achievement and success. With such a significant portion of Texas' young population growing up in poverty,<sup>1</sup> supporting early education is a way to help significant numbers of Texas children overcome challenges and prepare for success.<sup>2</sup> The Texas School Ready! project is an example of a research-based model that works in pinpointing the early education components that lead to the best results. It works in partnership with communities and is proven to produce measurable academic gains.

## What to Know

- **Many Texas children grow up in households where risk factors, such as poverty and lack of parental education, lead to gaps in school readiness.**

These result in what is commonly referred to as the "achievement gap," where family financial resources and other factors are shown to put some students at a disadvantage that, left unaddressed, can persist throughout the school years.



- Over the course of a child's academic career, the achievement gap can continue to widen and result in increased likelihood of grade retention, dropping out of high school, juvenile and adult crime, and fewer employment and earnings opportunities. The good news is that **the achievement gap can be prevented in the first place with the right kinds of early childhood education interventions.**
- **The Texas School Ready! project (TSR!) serves children between the ages of 3 and 4 who are disadvantaged** according to guidelines established by Head Start, the local school district, or child care programs. Community-based collaboration partnerships have been the cornerstone of the Texas School Ready! project, which has brought Head Start, child care, and public school pre-K providers together throughout 200 cities across Texas.
- Texas School Ready! has served more than 330,000 students since it began and has a track record of success. **Children in the program have made significant improvements in their school readiness<sup>3</sup>** since the implementation of the program, particularly in the areas of literacy and math testing. However, this progress is at risk if Texas School Ready! is not funded.
- A study conducted by a UT Health consortium of elementary school researchers found that less than 50% of all students pass the Texas Primary Reading Index.<sup>4</sup> But **among Texas School Ready! low-income students, the passing rates were much higher than the passing rate for students from all incomes:** 82% of those served in school-based TSR! sites passed, as did 67% in TSR! child care and 69% in TSR! Head Start.

*Focusing on Early opportunities & Youth success  
Getting kids Texas School Ready!*

## How to Make it Happen

- **Support the continued funding of quality pre-k reform programs** like the Texas School Ready! project that are proven to produce measurable academic gains and lay the foundation for other reforms in the K-12 system.

For more on this strategy, visit <http://txchildren.org/Early-Education>

## Thinking About Costs

During the economic downturn, Texas saw a spike in the number of children growing up in poverty. Giving disadvantaged children a good start in a high-quality early education setting doesn't just help those kids get the start they need for a life of learning and success; it helps generate revenue for Texas and saves the government dollars in the end.

## Sources

### "Thinking about Costs"

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  - 3 Correspondence with the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, 2012.
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