

# One Voice Texas

## A Collaborative for Health & Human Services



### Early Childhood Education: Maintain and Restore Proven Quality Investments in Early Childhood Education

**Position Statement Approved by One Voice Texas: December 13, 2012**

#### Issue/Concern:

The overwhelming body of scholarly research on the long-term benefits of high-quality early childhood education programs supports their positive impacts on child development, academic preparedness, and sustained success. The 82<sup>nd</sup> Legislature budget cuts included \$200 million in grant funding for pre-k quality improvement that recipient districts often used to extend the state's half-day program to full-day, impacting the program for 100,000 students across the state. Funding cuts for the pre-k foundation school program resulted in larger class sizes, loss of full-day programs, and loss of administrative support. Texas must halt this downward trend in support for its public pre-k program and begin to reverse it in the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislature.

**Specific Policy Recommendation(s):** Invest in and restore funding for all proven, high-quality early childhood programs, including:

- Pre-kindergarten quality improvement grant funding
- Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)
- Child Care Licensing through DFPS
- Texas Public School Pre-kindergarten Initiative funded by the Foundation School Program.

**How Will This Impact State Funding? What Can Be Accomplished?** Investments in quality early education reduce health and human services costs for all Texans. Whenever a family cannot access an early education program or must accept a low quality program, that family is at greater risk of needing a wide range of social services and that child is likely to enter kindergarten developmentally behind by up to two years. This can result in additional costs associated with remedial education, criminal justice costs, lower high school graduation rates, and lower literacy rates.

#### Supporting Facts/Research Resources:

1. A 2006 study by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) shows that children attending full-day programs did better on mathematics and literacy tests than children in a 2.5 to 3-hour public preschool program, and the achievement gains continued at least until the end of first grade.
2. The Texas Association of School Boards pre-k issue paper cites research that demonstrates children in high quality pre-k programs are more likely to graduate from high school, perform better on standardized tests, are less likely to repeat a grade and less likely to require special education services. Later in life they have better job prospects, are more financially independent, are not as likely to utilize public safety net systems, and are less likely to become engaged with the criminal justice system.
3. Students who attended HISD's pre-k program in the 2009-2010 school year outperformed their economically disadvantaged peers who did not attend HISD pre-k by nine normal curve equivalents on reading and eight normal curve equivalents in math.

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