High-Quality Prekindergarten

What is it, and how can it be achieved?

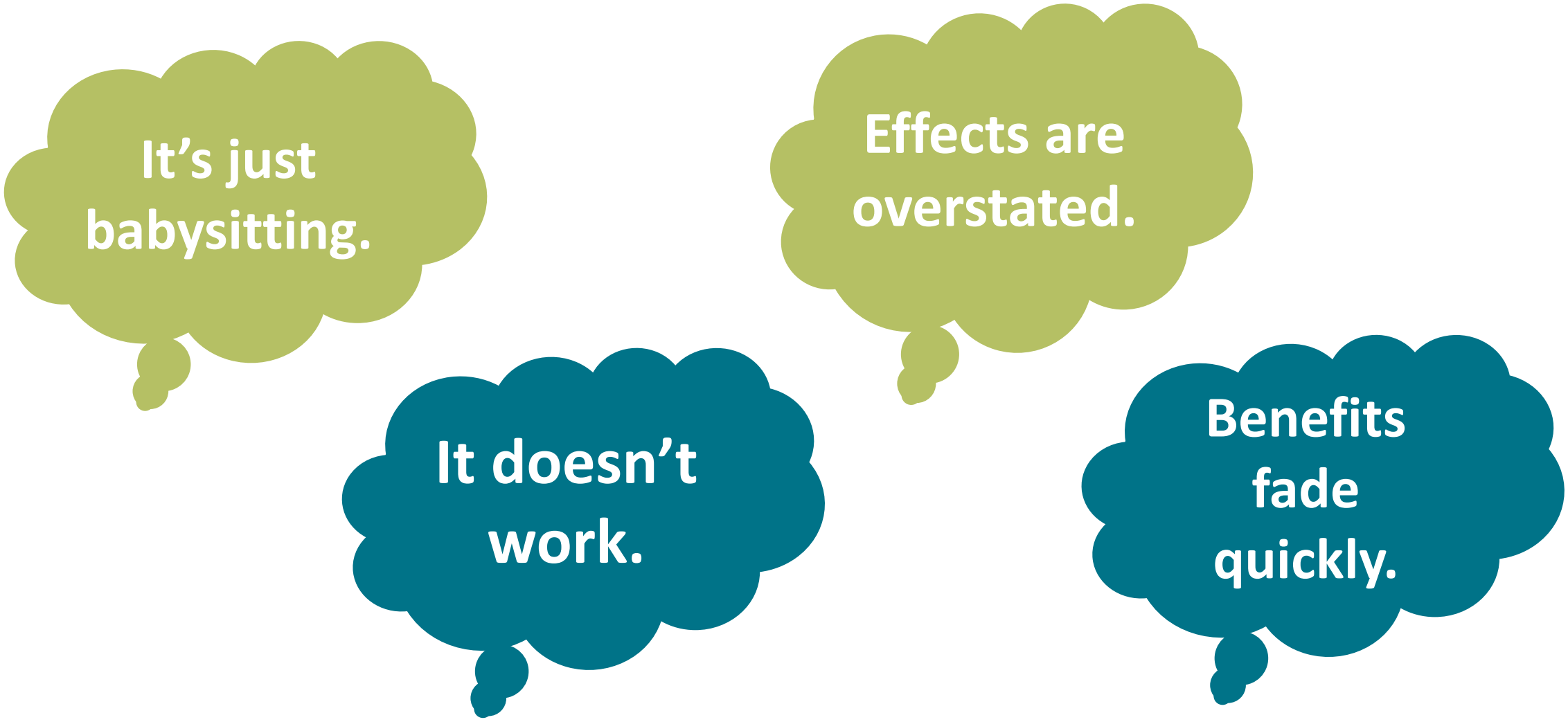
Early Childhood Fellows Program

Tuesday | Sept. 13, 2022

What is a state-funded prekindergarten program?

- Serves children of preschool age, usually 3- and/or 4-year-olds.
- Controlled and directed by the state.
- Typically funded by the state but can be funded by cities and school districts.
- Distinct from but may be coordinated and integrated with state child care subsidy system.
- Most designed to provide grants to community-based organizations and/or instead of, school districts.
- Varies from state to state:
  - Universally available or focused on specific populations (e.g., children from low-income backgrounds).
  - Early learning standards and guidelines for choosing curricula.

Common Prekindergarten Myths



Speakers

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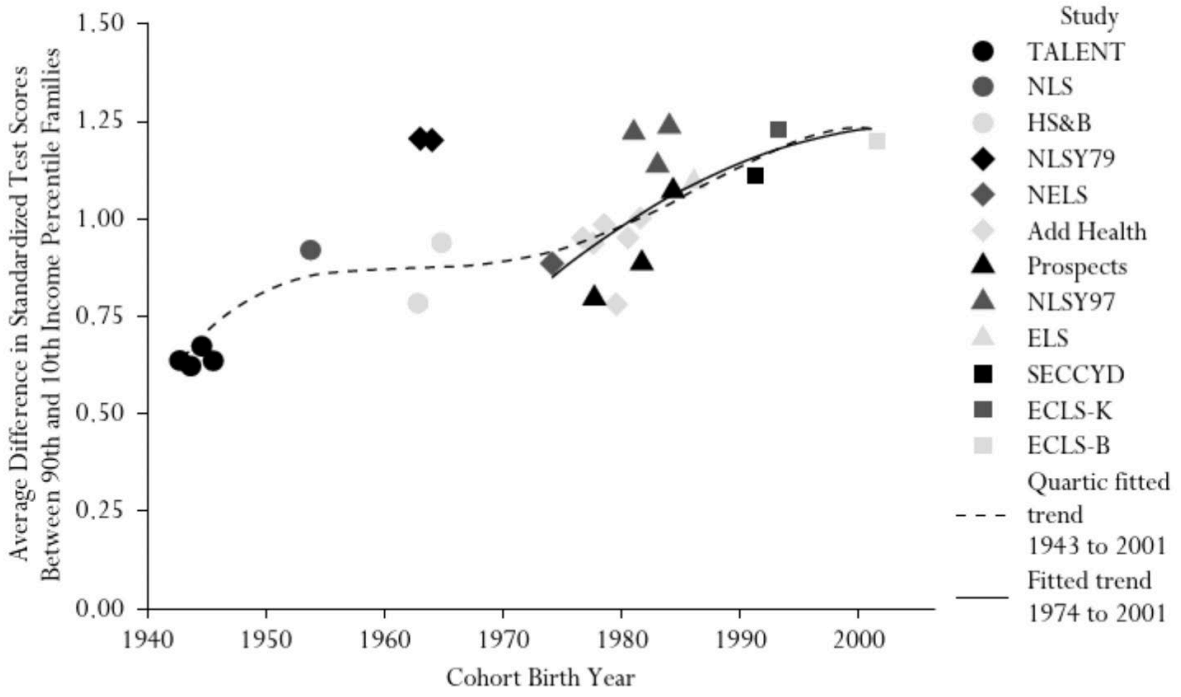
Public Pre-K:
What the Evidence Says

Dr. Anna Shapiro

University of Virginia

Achievement gaps between the **highest** and **lowest** income children have increased over time.

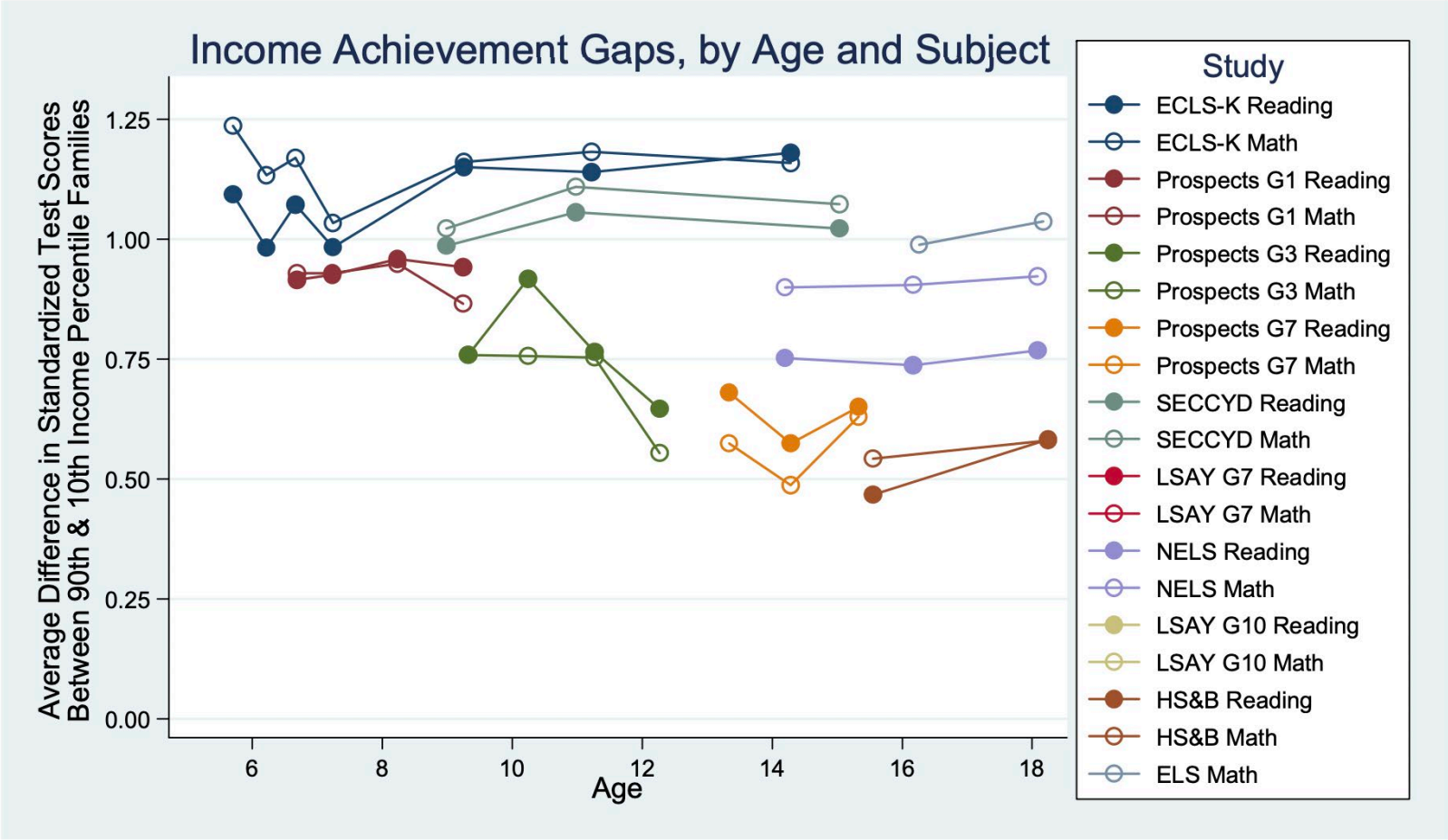
FIGURE 5.1 *Trend in 90/10 Income Achievement Gap in Reading, by Birth Cohort (1943 to 2001 Cohorts)*



Source: Authors' compilation based on data from Project Talent (Flanagan et al. n.d.); NLS, HS&B, NELS, ELS, ECLS-K, ECLS-B (U.S. Department of Education, Center for Education Statistics 1999, 2000, 2001, 2004, 2009, 2010); Prospects (U.S. Department of Education 1995); NLSY79, NLSY97 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 1980, 1999); SECCYD (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development 2010); and Add Health (Harris 2009, reading only).
Note: See note 4 and online appendix for further details.

Source: Reardon (2011)

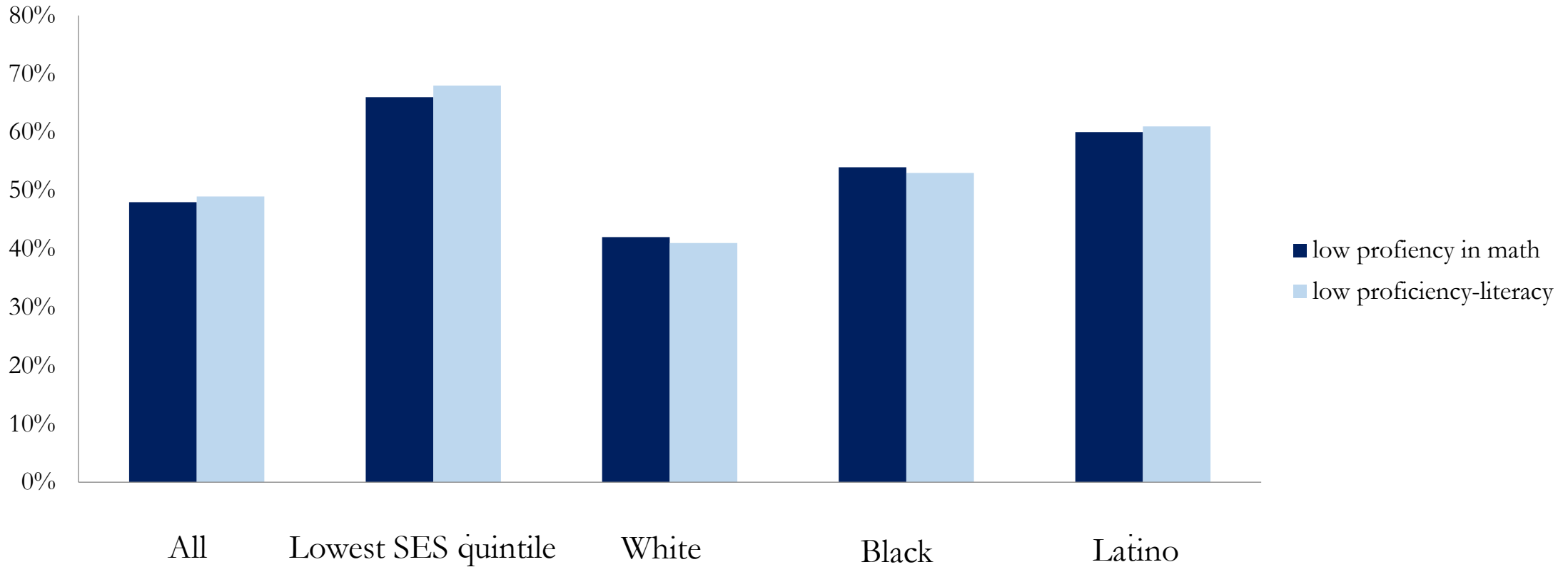
Most of the gaps measured **across primary schooling** are present at **school-entry.**



Source: Reardon (2010)

Too many children in the United States are **not entering school ready to learn**.

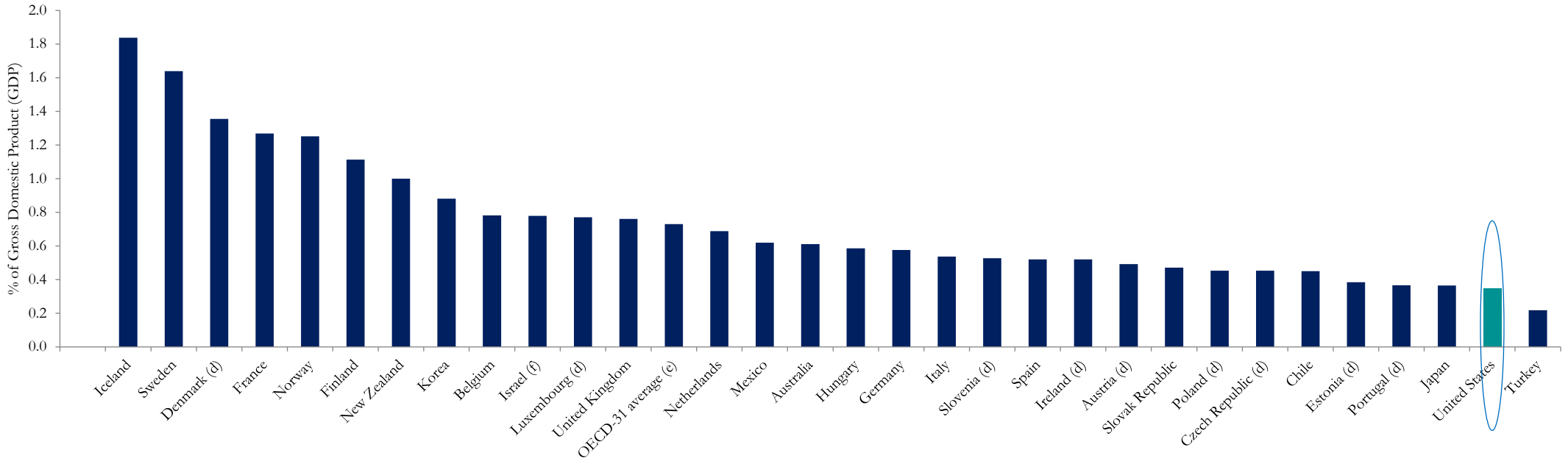
Percentage of students with low proficiency in math and literacy, 2010 ECLS-K kindergarten cohort



Source: Bassok & Latham 2016, Based on analysis of 2010 ECLS-K data

U.S. lags nearly all nations with advanced economies in spending on early childhood care and education.

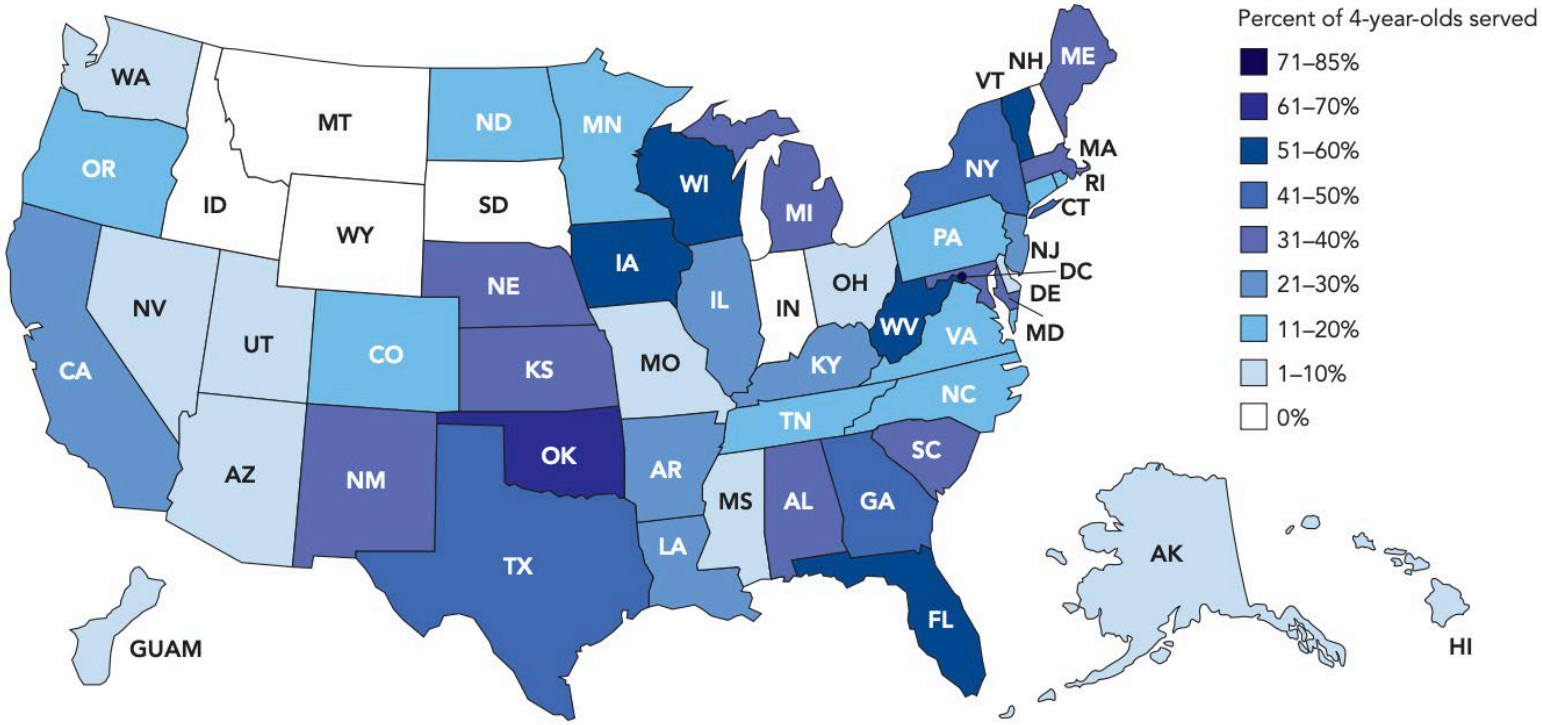
Public spending on early childhood care and education as a % of GDP, 2013 and latest available



Source: OECD Social Expenditure Database (3.1A)
Note: Total expenditures include child care and pre-primary education expenditures

Access to publicly funded pre-K **varies considerably across the states.**

FIGURE 8: LARGE INEQUITIES BETWEEN STATES IN PRESCHOOL ACCESS FOR 4-YEAR-OLDS

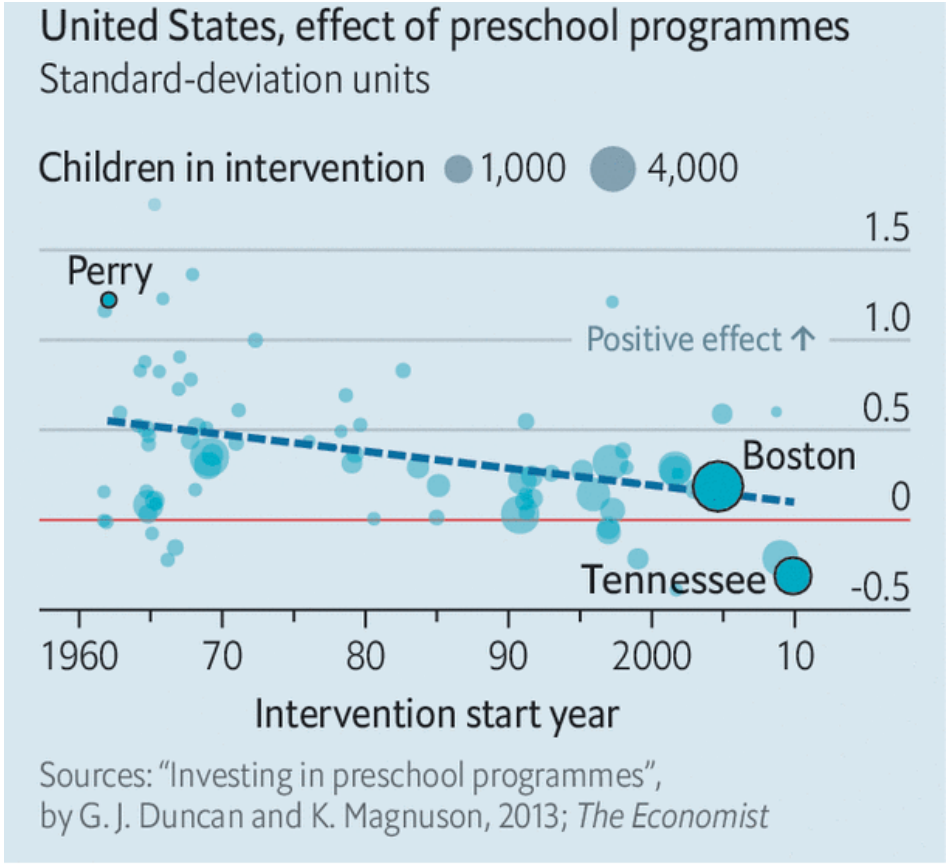


Pre-K Evidence

Decades of evidence shows preschool better prepares children for kindergarten and effects can last into adulthood (Phillips et al., 2017; Yoshikawa et al., 2013)

Experimental evidence from modern day public pre-K programs on test score impacts is more mixed

- Bigger and more complex systems
- More kids are going to alternate pre-K programs in the comparison group



The Economist

Test score effects fade, but **pre-K has long-term benefits.**

Recent results from studies of Boston's PK program (Gray-Lobe, Pathak & Walters, 2021) and Georgia's public PK program (Berne, 2022) add to this evidence base

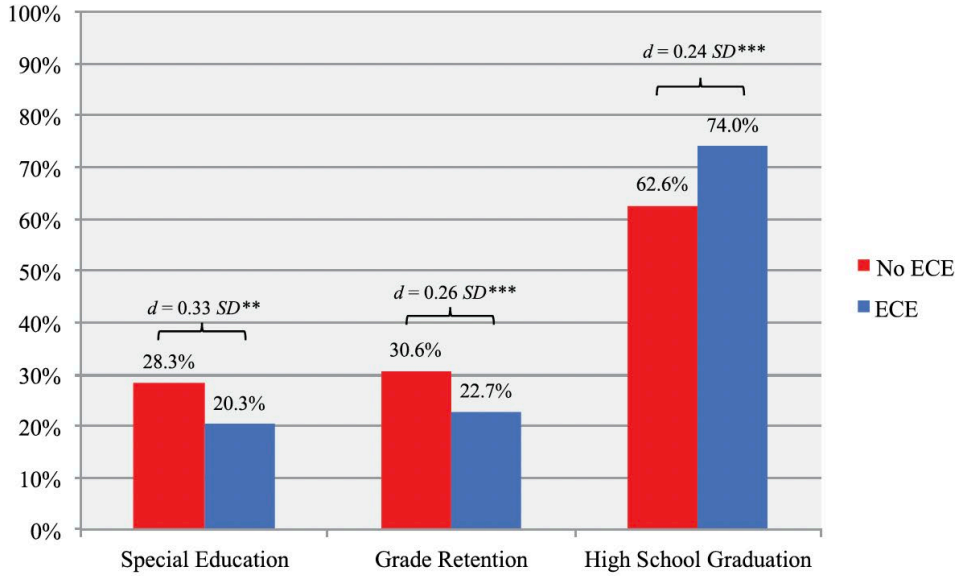


FIGURE 1. *Average rates of special education placement, grade retention, and high school graduation for early childhood education participants versus nonparticipants*
Effect sizes (*d*) represent results from all available observations (n = 75). Percentage point data represent results from a subset of observations (n = 62) with available data.
$^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$.

Making the most of public pre-K investments

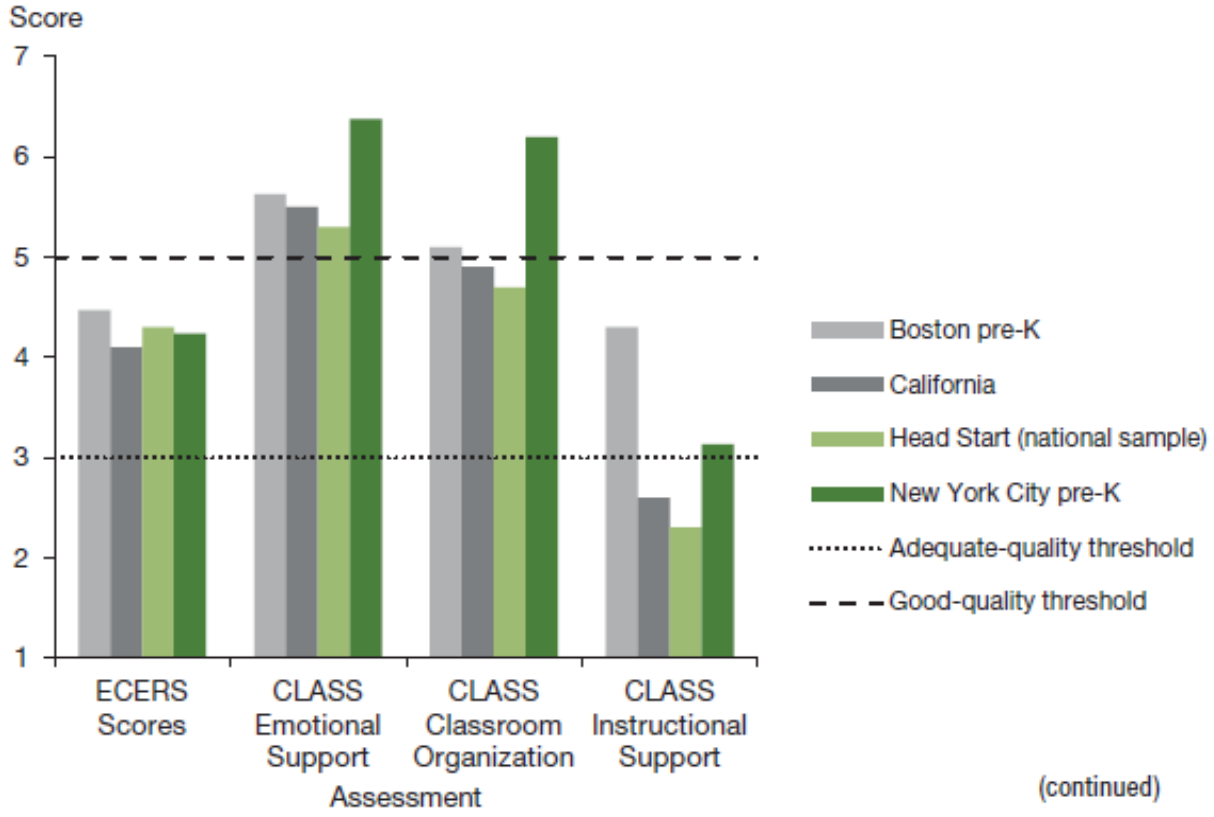
Quality matters, but varies a lot across public pre-K programs.

Public pre-K programs are in good shape in terms of class size, teacher-child ratios, basic safety, and emotional climate

Instructional quality is barely adequate in most large-scale systems

Evidence- and play-based curriculum with a specified scope and sequence and regular coaching can be powerful levers for improving quality in large-scale programs, yet they are not used in most of today's programs (Weiland & Yoshikawa, 2021)

Figure 1. Cross-System Comparisons Using ECERS and CLASS Scores



(continued)

Mixed delivery systems are the most common, but **ensuring quality across settings is crucial.**

Benefits	Challenges
Gives flexibility to families	Unequal compensation across sectors
Supports existing ECE programs in communities	Quality may vary in systematic ways
	Transition to kindergarten

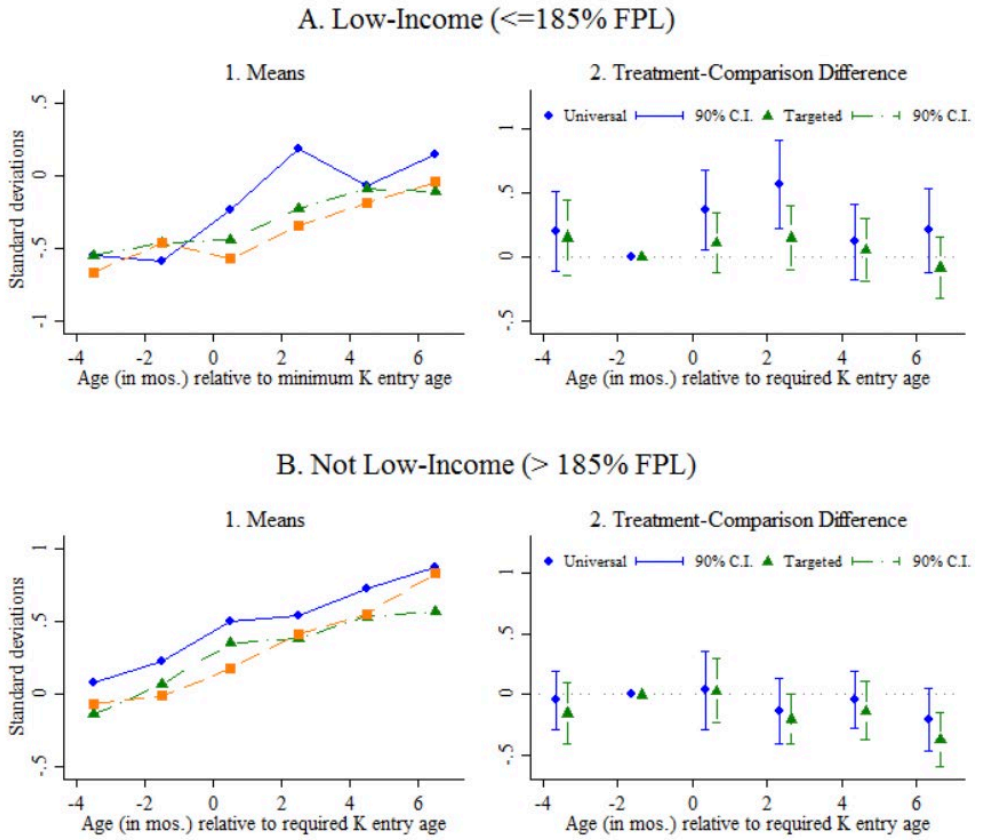
Source: Early Learning Network

Universal programs are more effective.

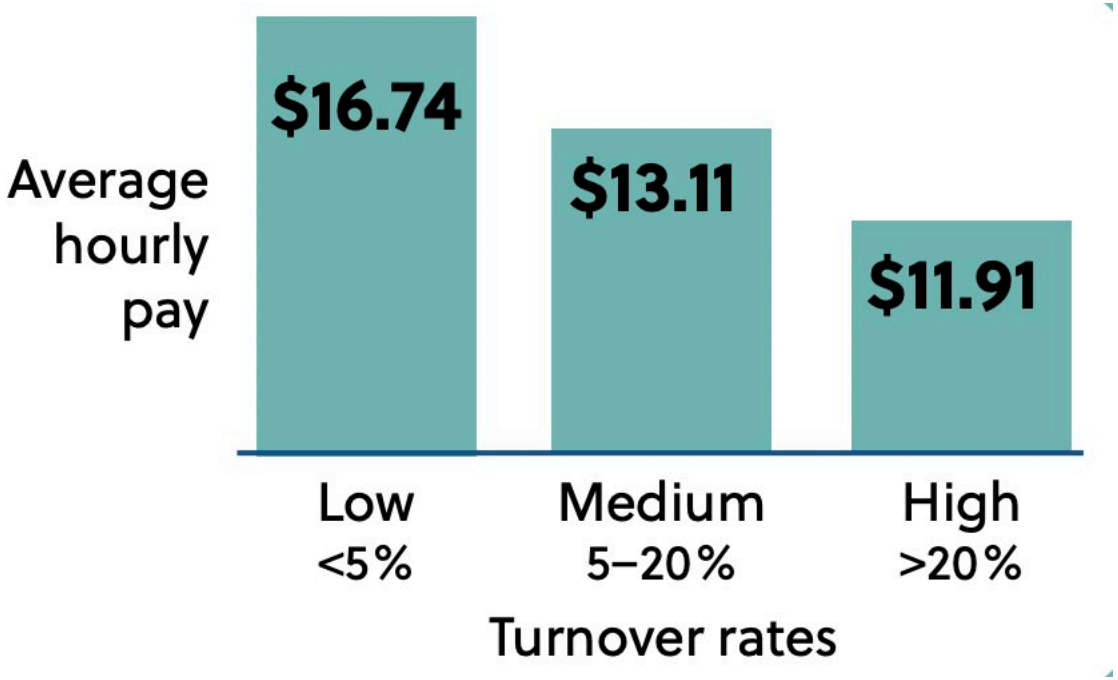
Recent study (Cascio, 2019) found that universal programs (i.e., programs open to all families) have larger impacts than do income-targeted programs

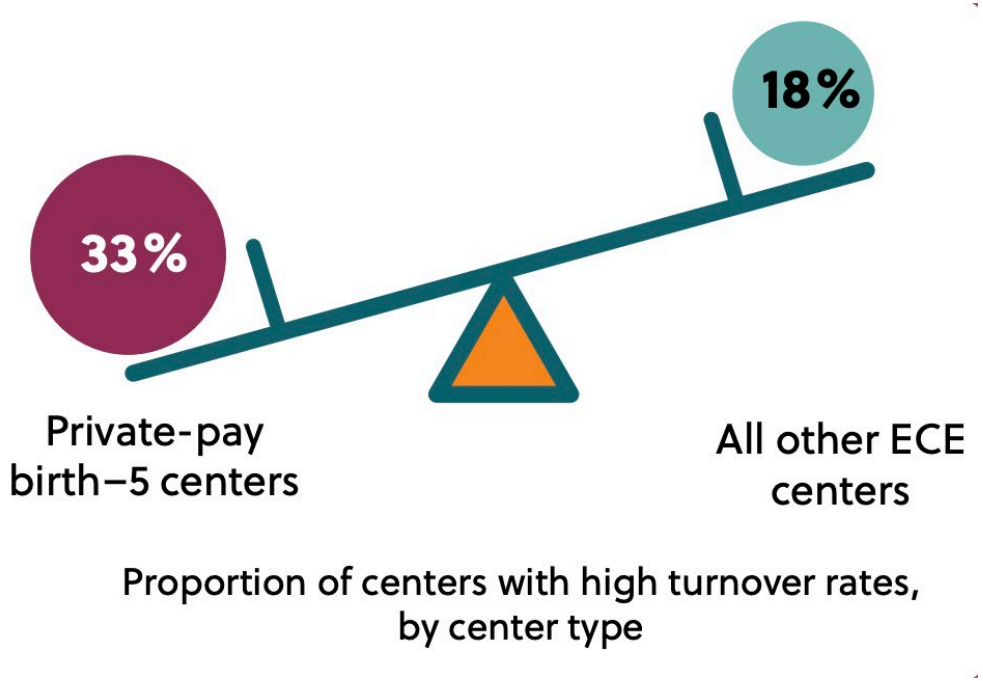
Importantly, the benefits of universal programs are particularly large for children from low-income families

Figure 5. Pre-K Eligibility and Test Scores by Age, State Program Type, and Poverty Status



Supporting the ECE workforce is vital.





Source: Institute for Education Sciences, *Staff turnover in the early childhood workforce*

PARTNERSHIP FOR PRE-K IMPROVEMENT

BUILDING HIGH-QUALITY & EQUITABLE PRE-K SYSTEMS

Lessons and Tools from the Partnership for Pre-K Improvement Project

NCSL Early Childhood Fellows – Sept. 13, 2022

The Partnership for pre-K Improvement (PPI)

Develop and sustain high-quality, equitable pre-K programs that produce positive early learning opportunities for every child

- 5-year collaboration by pre-K systems, research organizations, and advocacy groups in OR, TN, and WA
- Convened by Cultivate Learning, Alliance for Early Success, and Start Early
- Generously supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Partnership for Pre-K Improvement

Project Aims

- Learn together with states about how to implement and improve equitable and high-quality systems
- Develop strong program, advocacy, and research partnerships to sustain improvements over time
- Create tools to support states in building and implementing high-quality, equitable pre-k systems

Theory of Change

Theory of Change

- Systems Context
- Infrastructure
- Program Practices
- Classroom Quality
- Child Outcomes

Outcomes and Lessons from PPI

OREGON

- New funding for early childhood education from Student Success Act ($200 million annually for early education)
- Engaged stakeholders, including families and providers, to revise pre-K standards
- Supported TA providers and instructional leaders to implement quality standards at the local level
- Aligned quality standards, monitoring, and coaching activities across ECE programs and settings

WASHINGTON

- Passage of Fair Start for Kids Act (access and quality for both pre-K and child care)
- Increased capacity for improving inclusive practices with children with special learning needs
- Invested in racial equity training (e.g., implicit bias) and strategies (e.g., engaging tribes on implementing early learning programs)

TENNESSEE

- Sustained funding for VPK
- Articulated vision for VPK quality
- Implemented quality assurance policies (e.g., use of evidence-based curriculum, competitive grant application)
- Invested in first statewide quality data collection effort
- Explored collaboration between VPK and Head Start and alignment with K-3

Outcomes and Lessons from PPI

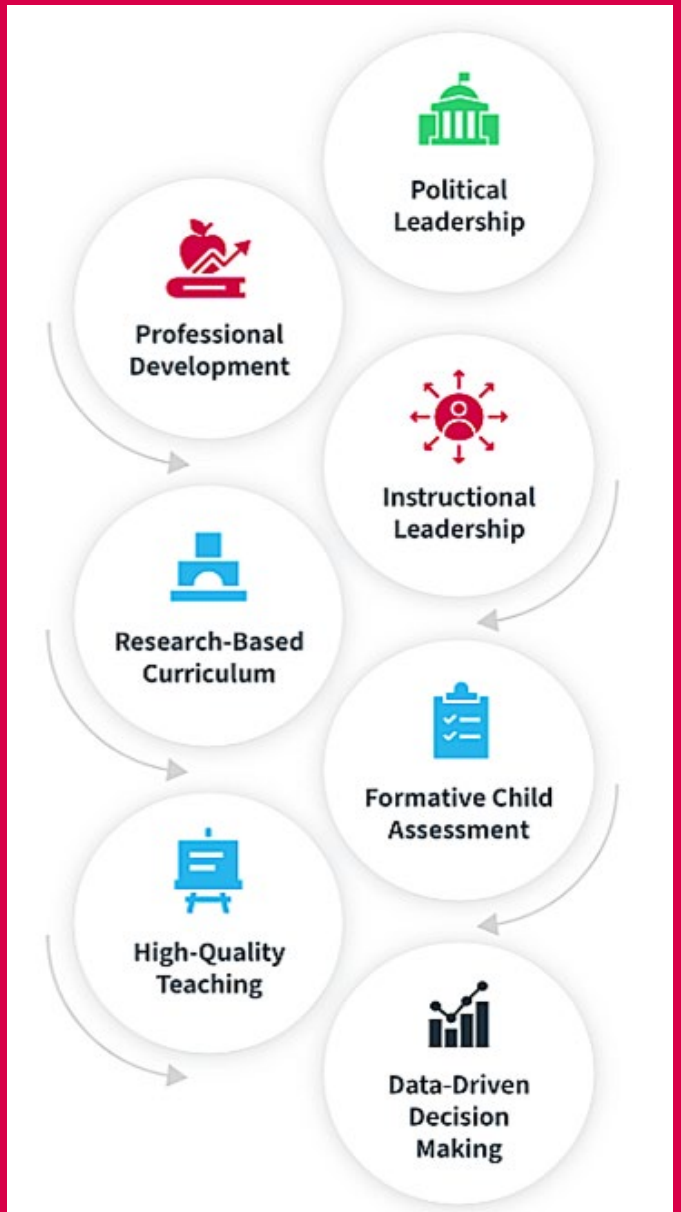
- Importance of articulating a vision for pre-K quality – and prioritize improvement strategy
- Invest in infrastructure for implementation and continuous, data-informed improvement
- Anticipate how work on pre-K will likely lead to work in child care, Head Start, and K-3; with schools, centers, and home-based providers
- The added value of state agencies partnering with researchers and advocates

The PPI Toolkit
https://upk-improvement.org/

1. Engage Stakeholders & Build Partnerships

2. Assess the System

3. Implement, Improve and Advocate



Implementation Development Map (IDM)

IDM is a self-assessment tool designed to evaluate the quality, and equity of the pre-K system, across seven elements essential to high quality pre-K.

- Each element has between **7-12 indicators**
- Each indicator gives a progression of a pre-K policy or practice along **four developmental stages** that a state can select based on available data

○	○	○	○
Initial Stages	In Development	In Place	Well Established

- **Infrastructure** and **implementation** Indicators

PARTNERSHIP FOR PRE-K IMPROVEMENT

Investing in Infrastructure for Implementation: Going Beyond Policies and Standards

Need to attend to capacity for implementation at local, regional, and state levels. For example…

Professional Development and Supports
- Coaching system (training, staffing and support)
- Support for instructional leaders
- Data collection and analysis
- Cultural competence

Curriculum and Assessment
- Training system (staffing, resources and materials)
- Data collection and analysis
- Culturally relevant and equitable tools

Data Infrastructure
- Data system (children, programs, educators)
- Data tools (assessment, surveys)
- Data use and analysis capacity (staffing, expertise)

For more on PPI…

For more information:

PPI Toolkit: https://upk-improvement.org/
Questions about the Toolkit? Contact:
ppitoolkitinfo@uw.edu

For general inquiries:
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Thank You

PARTNERSHIP FOR PRE-K IMPROVEMENT

Acknowledgement
This work was created as part of the Partnership for Pre-K Improvement (PPI), a collaboration between the Alliance for Early Success, Cultivate Learning, and Start Early with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Learn More

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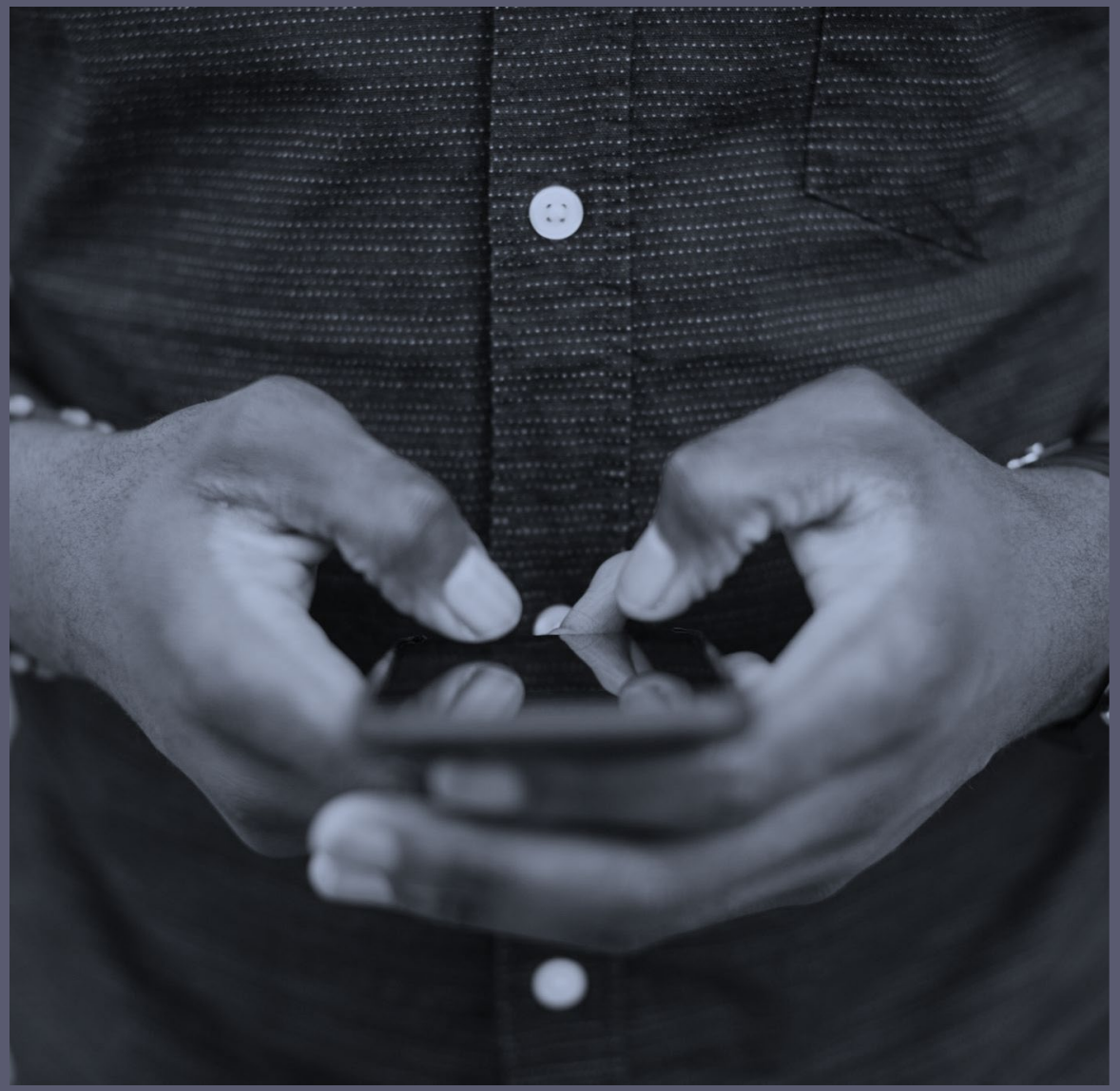
https://education.virginia.edu/anna-shapiro

Alliance for Early Success

Every Child. Every State.

https://earlysuccess.org/



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