

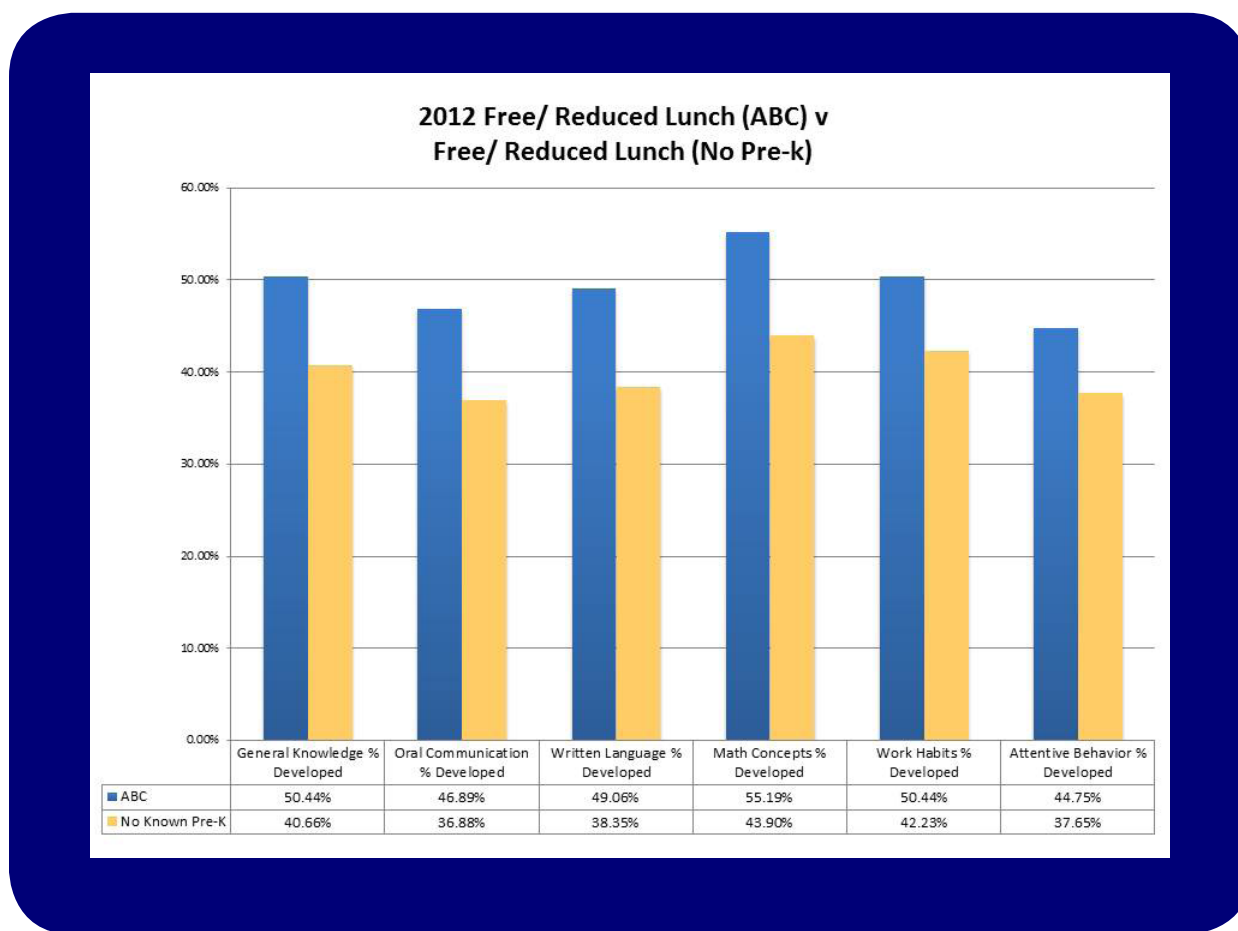
5 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PRE-K IN ARKANSAS



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1. IT CHANGES CHILDREN'S LIVES FOR THE BETTER

Children who participate in pre-K, particularly low-income children, are better prepared for kindergarten.¹

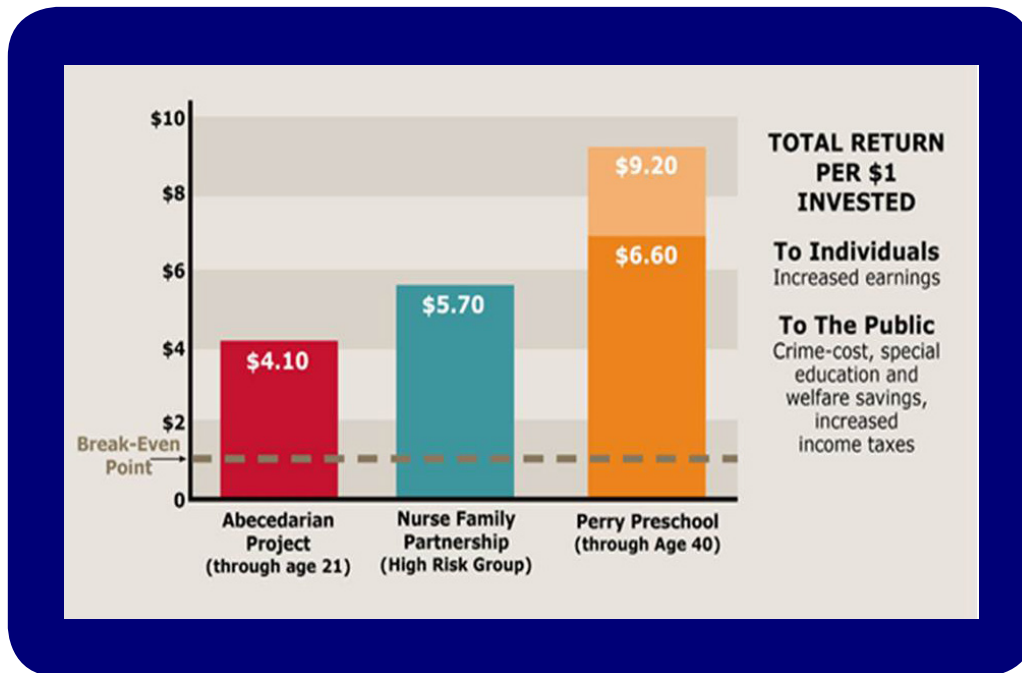


According to the National Institute for Early Education Research, positive effects were found at the end of first and second grade for language, math, and literacy, and at the end of third grade for literacy. They also found that children who attended ABC pre-K were less likely to have been retained by the end of third grade.²

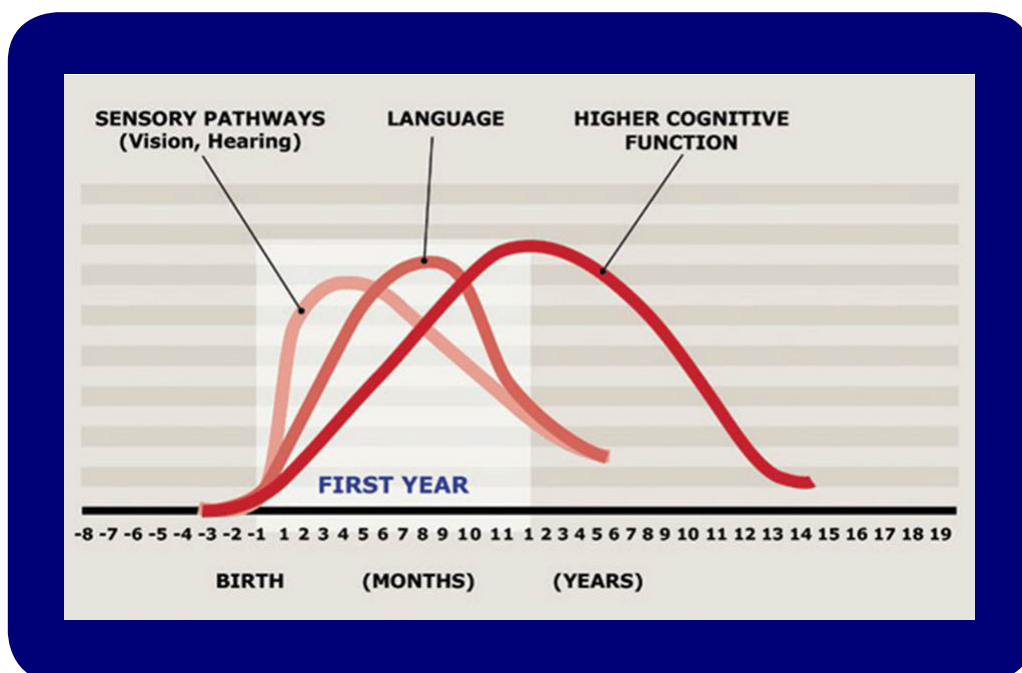
Children who read successfully by the end of the third grade are more likely to graduate from high school. Children with low grades in elementary school are more likely to drop-out of school early.³ Other benefits that reduce costs include reducing the need for costly special education, increasing the likelihood of better health outcomes, and reducing involvement in the criminal justice system.⁴

2. IT'S A GOOD INVESTMENT

In their August 2014 newsletter, the Helen R. Walton Children's Enrichment Center cited the amount of \$9.21 return for every dollar invested in early childhood education.⁵ Other longitudinal studies indicating investment return research are shown in the chart.⁶ Work by W. Steven Barnett at NIEER and James Heckman (Nobel laureate) at the University of Chicago among other have documented the research.

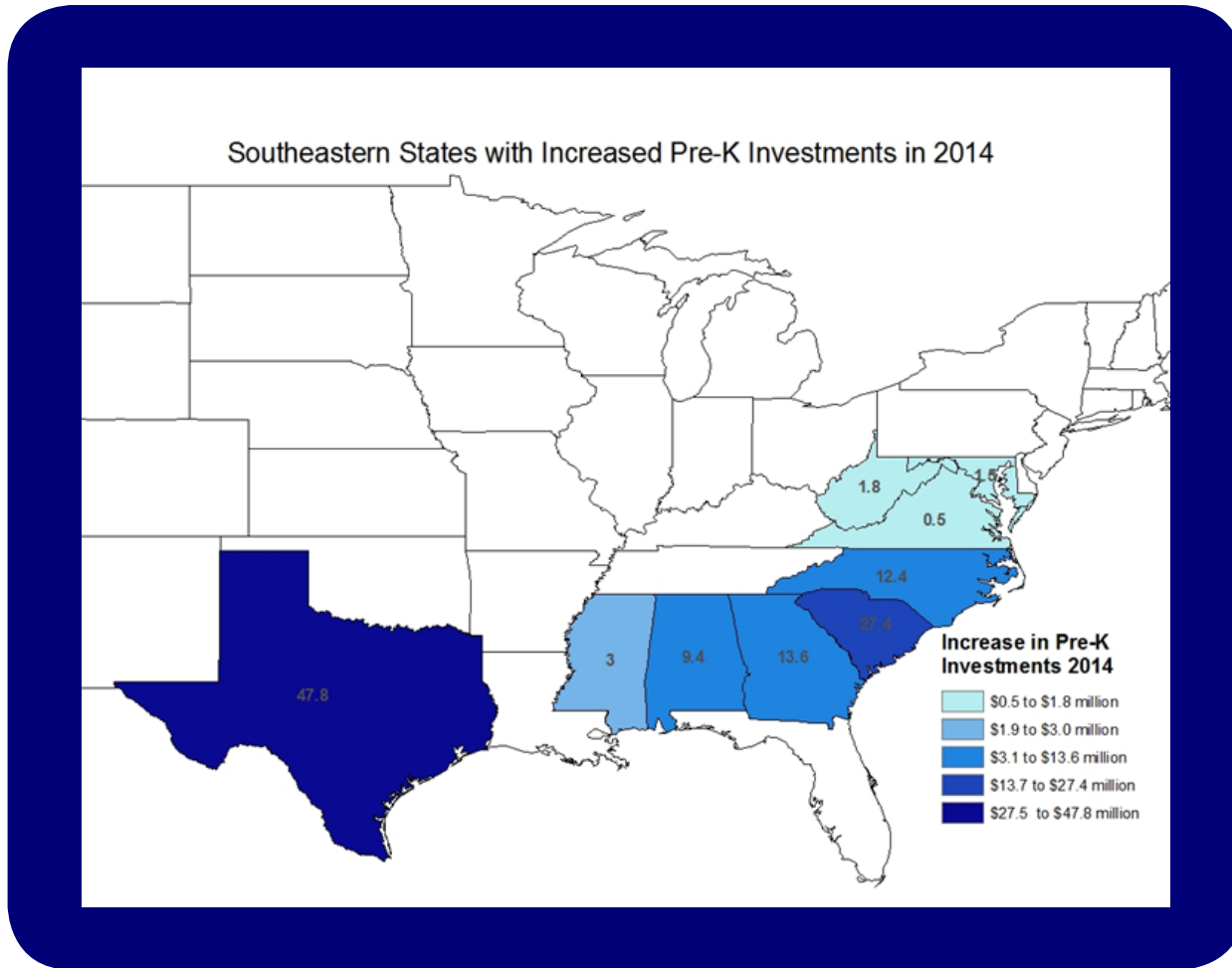


The early childhood period (birth to age 5) is a time of rapid brain development.⁷ Researchers estimate that 80 percent of brain development occurs before children enter kindergarten. Early experiences are the foundation on which all later learning is built. Investing at this early point provides the most efficient and effective intervention to insure later success in school.⁸



3. IT'S ESSENTIAL TO OUR ECONOMY

Who's Pumping up Investment in Pre-K? Answer: Not Arkansas.⁹



Oklahoma did not increase investment in 2014 but had significant increases in prior years.

4. IT CAN'T SURVIVE AT THE CURRENT FUNDING LEVEL

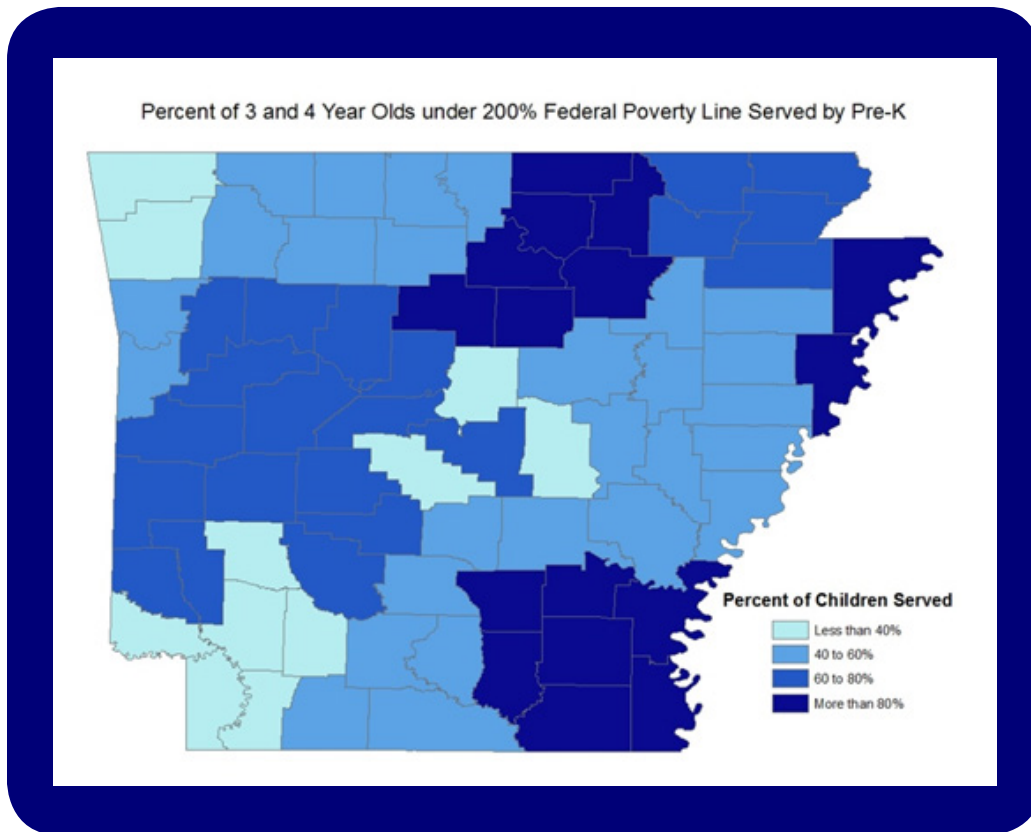
Arkansas is investing on the wrong segment of our population. Instead of providing supports children need to learn and become successful tax payers, we are increasing our investment on our growing prison population.

ARKANSAS FUNDING SCOREBOARDS	PERCENT OF GENERAL REVENUE INCREASE 2008-2015
Prisons	19%
Pre-K	0%

Final general revenue distribution records indicate that from 2008 to 2015 Arkansas provided an increase of \$66.3 million for Corrections-Inmate Care, Department of Community Corrections, and County Jail Reimbursement.¹⁰

5. IT CAN'T SERVE ENOUGH CHILDREN AT THE CURRENT FUNDING LEVEL

The Arkansas Early Childhood System Serves a very small percentage of our children in programs rated as quality (ABC or Head Start) or in the highest Better Beginnings Level.¹¹



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Arkansas should invest in its future workforce through early childhood education.
- Additional funding is needed to sustain the current Arkansas Better Chance program at its current level of service. It would take \$14 million to equal the Consumer Price Index since the last funding increase.
- To expand the reach of the Arkansas Better Chance program, additional need must be met for eligible 3- and 4-year-olds at the current eligibility requirement of 200 percent of the federal poverty level.
- Programs to expand access to children beyond the 200 percent of FPL, should be considered after funding current slots and funding access at the current eligibility level.
- Other licensed child care providers, including those serving infants and toddlers, need funding and incentives to improve quality by reducing class sizes and raising credentials required for care-givers.

NOTES

¹ Arkansas Research Center https://arc.arkansas.gov/arc_web/resources/publications/ABC_Shinks_Gap.pdf

² NIEER, <http://nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/Arkansas%20Longitudinal%20Report%20May2013n.pdf>

³ Achieve, Inc. American Diploma Project Network, "Identifying Potential Dropouts: Key Lessons for Building an Early Warning Data System," June 2006.

⁴ Heckman, James J. "The Economics of Inequality: The Value of Early Childhood Education." *American Educator*, Spring 2011.

⁵ Helen R. Walton Children's Enrichment Center, Quarterly Newsletter, August 2014.

⁶ NIEER.org, <http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2014-01-16/the-heckman-equation-early-childhood-education-benefits-all>

⁷ Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University (n. d.). InBrief: The science of early childhood development. Retrieved from: http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/briefs/inbrief_series/inbrief_the_sci-ence_of_ecd/

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Workman, Emily, Griffith, Michael, Atchison, Bruce.. "State Pre-K Funding—2013-14 Fiscal Year" Education Commission of the States, January 2014

¹⁰ Bureau of Legislative Research, Final General Revenue Distribution, 2008 through Special Session of 2014.

¹¹ Data Source is analysis by University of Arkansas Medical Sciences staff of Arkansas Department of Human Services enrollment data from April 2014. The enrollment data was for ABC programs in a classroom setting such as center-based or licensed home-based programs.