



## North Carolina's Child Care System Supports Working Families & Economic Development



THE UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA  
**GREENSBORO**

### **Question: Why Do Child Care Programs Earn Stars?**

#### **Answer: Transparency & Accountability for Parents and Policymakers<sup>1</sup>**

- Child care programs earn **1 to 5 stars** based on the **quality of the learning environment**.
- **Parents and policymakers** are easily able to **identify the programs that are best for children** and **promote both school readiness** and the **economic development** of the state.
- **Policymakers** can ensure children in **poverty** and children at risk are in the **highest quality child care** that **best prepares them for school**, closes the achievement gap, and **breaks the cycle of poverty**.

### **Question: Do More Stars Mean Higher Quality Child Care?**

#### **Answer: Recent Study Validated 4 and 5 Star Centers Provide Higher Quality Child Care<sup>2</sup>**

- Children of all age groups experienced significantly **higher quality learning environments** and **received more appropriate instructional and emotional support** in 4 and 5 star centers compared to their peers in centers with 1 to 3 stars.

### **Question: Why Does High Quality Child Care Matter to Policymakers and the Economic Development of North Carolina?**

#### **Answer: Research Conducted in North Carolina indicates High Quality Child Care is Less Stressful and Fosters Cognitive and Emotional Skills that Prepare Children for School and to be Contributing Citizens of North Carolina.<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>**

- Children had more **positive learning experiences** and were more **engaged in learning activities** in higher quality child care.<sup>2</sup>
- Young children demonstrated **more advanced cognitive and social skills** in higher quality child care.<sup>2</sup>
- Preschoolers in classrooms with more **appropriate instructional and emotional support** from teachers had **lower stress levels**; whereas preschoolers with less instructional and emotional support had higher stress levels with abnormal physiological changes in stress hormones.<sup>3</sup>

### **Question: How Does High Quality Child Care Support North Carolina's Economic Development?**

#### **Answer: More Stars, Higher Quality Child Care, Cultivates Productive Citizens of North Carolina**

- Child care programs **mold brain architecture** with **90% of the brain developing** during the **first 3 years** of life.
- **Investments in young children** yield the **greatest economic return** to the state.<sup>1</sup>
- The **cognitive, social, and emotional outcomes<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>** of **young children**, resulting from the **quality of their child care experiences**, **defines North Carolina's future workforce and economy.**<sup>1</sup>

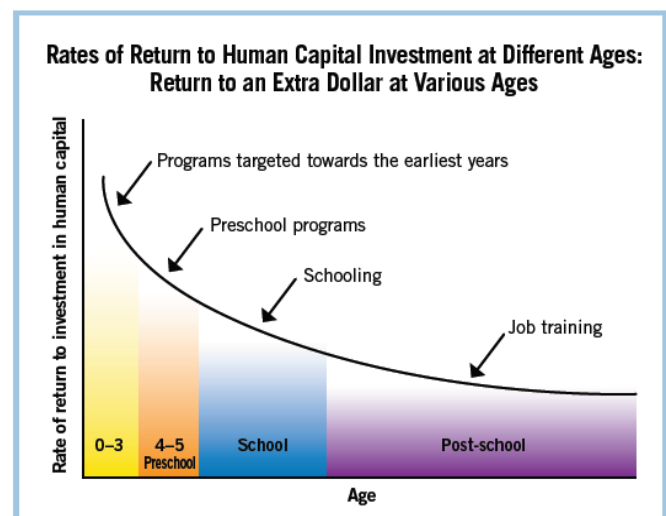


Image Source: U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the Institute for a Competitive Workforce (2010). Why Business Should Support Early Childhood Education.

References:<sup>1</sup>U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the Institute for a Competitive Workforce (2010). Why Business Should Support Early Childhood Education. <sup>2</sup>Hestenes, L., Mims, S., Crosby, D., Kintner-Duffy, V., Rucker, L., LaParo, K. (June, 2010). A Comparison of Quality Assessment Tools. Presentation for the Quality Rating and Improvement Advisory Committee for the North Carolina Division of Child Development. <sup>3</sup>Hatfield, B.E., Hestenes, L. L., Kintner-Duffy, V. L., & O'Brien, M. (under review). Classroom process quality predicts differences in preschool children's cortisol and alpha-amylase levels.