



Tennessee Alliance for Early Education

The Tennessee Alliance for Early Education was established in 2005. It is a bipartisan coalition of more than 1,000 individuals and groups who believe the expansion of pre-K opportunities across the state is critical to the future success of our children.

Since the 2005-2006 school year, Tennessee has provided \$213 million new dollars for pre-K education, creating 786 new classrooms and serving an additional 15,000 preschoolers across the state. To date, Tennessee has 934 state-funded pre-K classes – in 94 of 95 Tennessee counties and 133 of 135 eligible school systems – serving approximately 18,000 young children.

The Alliance supports maintaining full funding of the state's Voluntary Pre-K Program in 2010.

Benefits of Early Childhood Education and Care

- Benefits of quality early childhood education and care include higher median annual earnings, higher employment rates, higher instances of home ownership, and fewer cases of arrests and imprisonment.¹
- Every \$1 invested in high-quality pre-K saves taxpayers up to \$7.²
- At the end of the day, **all of us** pay for school failure in remediation, lost potential and an uncompetitive work force.
- No matter what your income or where you live, it can be tough to find high-quality pre-K. And when families can't find high quality – or pay thousands of dollars for low quality – we all lose.
- A high-quality pre-K education is a lot cheaper than the costs of special education, having children repeat grades, and dealing with high school dropouts and juveniles involved in crime.

History of Pre-K in Tennessee³

1963 – Federal legislation passed permitting school systems to use federal or local funds for pre-K programs.

1990 – Resolution passed directing the Tennessee Board of Education and Department of Education to convene a task force “for the purpose of developing and proposing a state plan for establishment of a comprehensive system of [state-funded] early childhood and parent education programs for at-risk children and their parents.”

1992 – The earliest versions of the bill that became the Education Improvement Act of 1992 mentioned pre-kindergarten.

1995 – The Tennessee Board of Education adopted the Tennessee Early Childhood Education Plan.

1996 – Legislation passed permitting early childhood pilot programs for economically disadvantaged 3- and 4-year-olds.

2003 – Legislation passed expanding early childhood pilot program eligibility.

2005 – The Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Act passed.

¹ Schweinhart, L.J. 2004. *The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40: Summary, Conclusions and Frequently Asked Questions*. Ypsilanti, Mich.: The High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, November.

² *The Benefits of High-Quality Pre-K*. Pre-KNow.org.

³ *Policy History: Tennessee's Pre-Kindergarten Program*. Offices of Research and Education Accountability. Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury, Justin P. Wilson. 2009.