



OFFICE OF GOVERNOR MARK DAYTON

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Early Childhood Education Scholarships

Investing in Early Learning

The most important investment our state can make is in our children's future. That is why Governor Dayton's budget makes a major investment in Early Childhood Education. The Governor's budget provides an additional \$40 million for early learning scholarships that will help up to 8,000 low- and middle-income kids attend quality child care and preschool whose families otherwise may not have been able to afford it. These types of programs have shown a return on investment as high as 16:1 over the course of a child's lifetime. Over the long-term this is one of the strongest investments our state can make.

Program Background

In 2011, Governor Dayton worked with the legislature to establish Early Childhood Education Scholarships for Minnesota children, ages three through five. Two million dollars was made available for scholarships in 2013 and \$3 million is slated for 2014. To date, 460 children have received scholarships of up to \$4,000. Without an additional investment, just 690 students per year would receive a scholarship to attend preschool in Minnesota.

Investing in Our Youngest Learners

Since 2005, state investments in early childhood education have been essentially flat, and in recent years Minnesota has ranked 39th in access to preschool for 4-year-olds. But Governor Dayton's historic investment in Early Childhood Education Scholarships will expand the state's commitment to our youngest learners, sending up to 8,000 more kids to quality child care and preschool and dramatically improving access to quality, affordable early learning programs.

» **Minnesota Kindergartners Are Coming to School Unprepared to Learn.** Half of all Kindergartners are entering the K-12 system unprepared to learn. Those who enter Kindergarten prepared to learn are more likely to meet or exceed standards in reading and math by third grade and less likely to require special education or remediation.

» **These Scholarships Will Directly Address Minnesota's Achievement Gap.** Minnesota has one of the nation's most glaring achievement gaps, ranking 49th among the 50 states. Numerous studies show that the best way to close this gap and adequately prepare all children for success in school and life, is through strategic investments in high quality early learning that prepare children for Kindergarten.

» **Investments in Early Learning Deliver a Concrete Return on Investment.** Children's school readiness is a predictor of later outcomes, even lifelong outcomes. In fact, economists at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis have found that every \$1 invested in high quality early learning yields a \$16 return on our investment. Most of that cost savings is in education, human services, and justice system savings, as well as increased tax revenue.