
I'M THE GUY YOU PAY LATER



Sheriffs, Chiefs and Prosecutors Urge America to Cut Crime by Investing Now in High-Quality Early Education and Care



A NEBRASKA REPORT BY:



Acknowledgements

FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS is a national, bipartisan, nonprofit, anti-crime organization. The organization has a membership of nearly 5,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, district attorneys, other law enforcement leaders and violence survivors. The members take a hard-nosed look at what approaches work—and what don't—to prevent crime and violence. They then recommend effective strategies to state and national policymakers. It operates under the umbrella of the Council for a Strong America.

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Executive Summary



City of Lincoln Public Safety Director, Tom Casady, has a direct message for everyone who cares about the impact and cost of crime:

“By the time we arrest criminals and bring them to justice, much of the damage they cause has already been done. We could prevent a great deal of that. High-quality early education and care is a proven way to provide kids an opportunity to become successful and prevent the devastating impacts of crime.”

The almost 5,000 law enforcement leaders around the nation and over 80 here in Nebraska who are members of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids know that one of the best ways to keep young people from dropping out of school and becoming criminals is to make sure they have a foundation for success in their earliest years. By standing up in support of high-quality early education and care for kids today we hope to see less crime and incarceration in years to come.

Law enforcement leaders like Public Safety Director Casady base their views on personal experiences and research. A study that followed children who participated in high-quality preschool and parent coaching programs through Chicago’s Child-Parent Centers found they were 20 percent less likely to be arrested for a felony or be incarcerated as young adults than those who did not attend. In recent years, studies of state preschool programs have found significant increases in academic performance, and also important decreases in the need for special education and in being held back in school. Studies of voluntary home visiting programs document reductions in child abuse and neglect, and later crime as well.

Reducing crime is one of the key reasons why Governors and state legislators across the political spectrum, have made bold commitments to high-quality early education and care. And now we are at a key fork in the road: policymakers in our state have an outstanding opportunity to bring higher quality early learning experiences to more low- and moderate-income children in Nebraska.

We currently spend \$75 billion every year on corrections nationwide to incarcerate more than 2 million criminals. Nebraska spends more than \$190 million per year. That does not include county jails. Douglas County alone houses over 1,000 inmates at a cost of over \$30 million a year.

A sophisticated analysis of over 20 preschool programs for disadvantaged children demonstrated that quality preschool returned an average “profit” (economic benefits minus costs) to society of nearly \$25,000 for every child served by cutting crime and the cost of incarceration and reducing other costs such as special education and welfare.

As stated by Public Safety Director Casady, the choice is simple: “Pay for early education and care delivered with high-quality to Nebraska kids now, or pay far more later for the costs of crime in Nebraska.”

I'M THE GUY YOU PAY LATER

Sheriffs, Chiefs and Prosecutors Urge America to Cut Crime by Investing Now in High-Quality Early Education and Care

A Fork in the Road

Our number one priority is protecting the safety of our communities in Nebraska. We do this by arresting, prosecuting and, when necessary, incarcerating people who commit crimes. But ultimately our best opportunity to improve public safety is to keep people from becoming involved in crime in the first place. To do so, we urge our elected leaders to invest in strategies and practices that have proven, positive and long-term impacts on crime reduction.

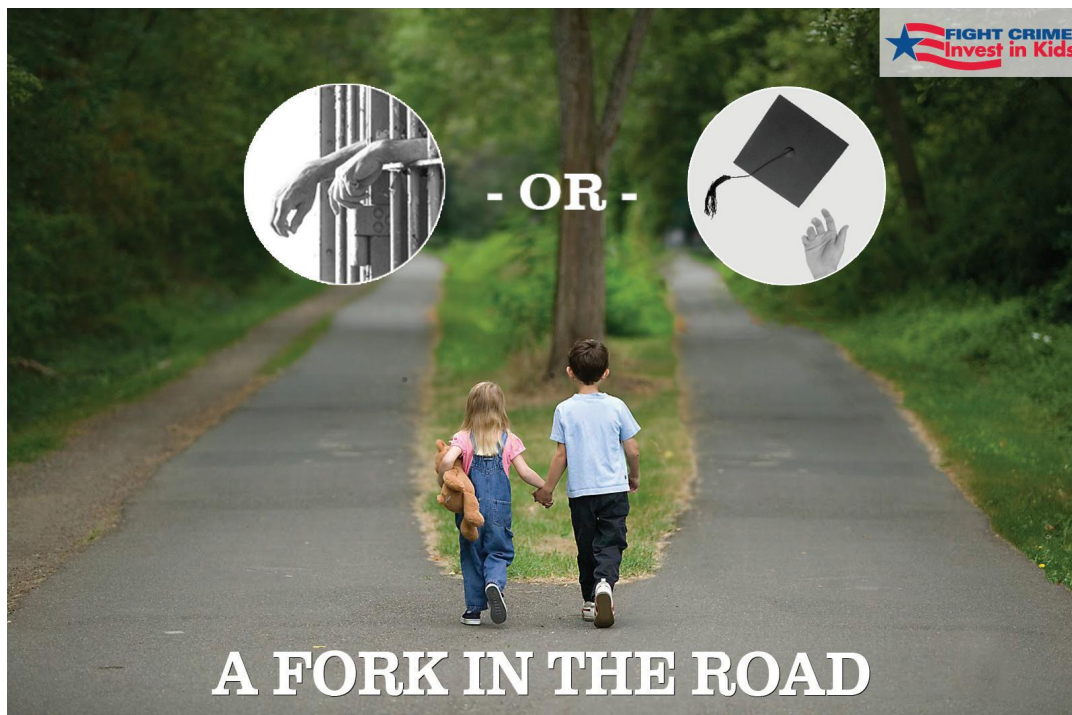
We already know where our current path is leading us:

- Although crime rates have fallen over the past 20 years, including in Nebraska, there are still 1.2 million violent crimes and 9 million property crimes committed

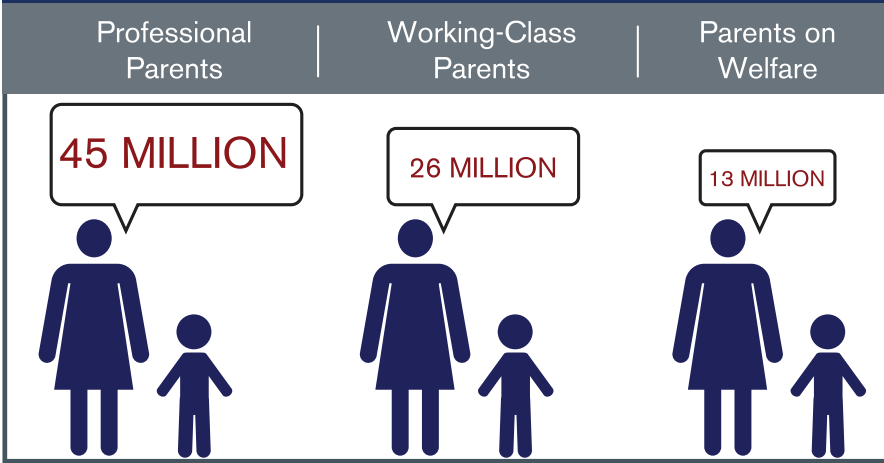
against people in our communities across America every year.¹ In Nebraska, there are over 4,800 violent crimes annually, a rate of 259 per 100,000,²

Nebraska has over 5,000 adults incarcerated in state prisons, and over 1,000 in the Douglas County jail.

- Nebraska has over 5,000 adults incarcerated in state prisons, and over 1,000 in the Douglas County jail;³
- Nationally, we spend nearly \$75 billion a year to incarcerate adults in federal and state prisons or local jails.⁴ Nebraska spends more than \$190 million a year including \$30 million in Douglas County⁵ and
- Seven out of ten state prisoners nationwide do not have a high school diploma, and finding stable employment once they leave prison is very challenging.⁶



Words Spoken By Parents to their Young Children



Source: Hart & Risley, 2004

While these facts are daunting, they do not even begin to reflect crime's other economic costs, or the suffering of crime victims in Nebraska. The path we are on is both fiscally unsustainable and devastating in its impact on human lives.

Making a Smarter Choice, at a Pivotal Time

Fortunately, we can steer millions of children across America toward successful lives through high-quality early education and care, which has been proven to lead to less abuse and neglect, better performance in school, fewer high school drop-outs and, ultimately, fewer crimes committed and a reduction in the number of prisoners.

The research behind these outcomes shows that the first five years is a time of rapid brain development, and that hundreds of new connections in the brain form every second.⁷ Early experiences play a large role in determining how brain connections are formed and in the "wiring" that becomes the foundation on which all later learning is built.

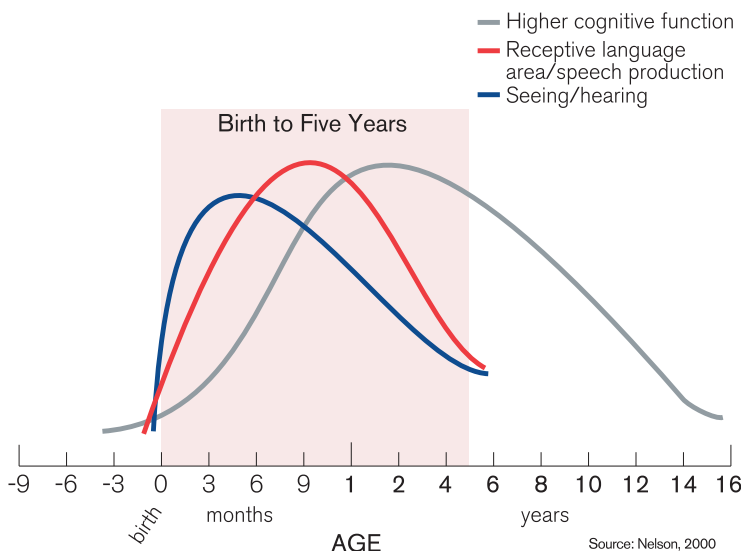
For example, by age 6 months, babies start to understand the link between words and their meanings. This sets the stage for language development and later reading. Yet children from different backgrounds have very different early experiences. Researchers observed children in their own homes monthly for over two years, until the age of three, and recorded how many words their parents spoke to them. There were large differences

in the average number of words spoken to the children by professional parents, working class parents, and parents receiving welfare:

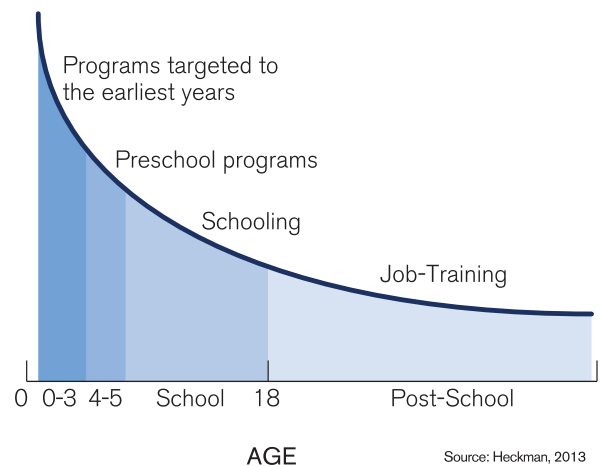
- professional parents 45 million words
- working-class parents 26 million
- parents receiving welfare 13 million.⁸

These differences affected the children's vocabulary development: by age three, children with professional parents had average vocabularies of 1,116 words, compared to 749 words for working-class and 525 for children of parents receiving welfare. By the time children reach kindergarten, too many are not only far

Synapse Formation in the Developing Brain



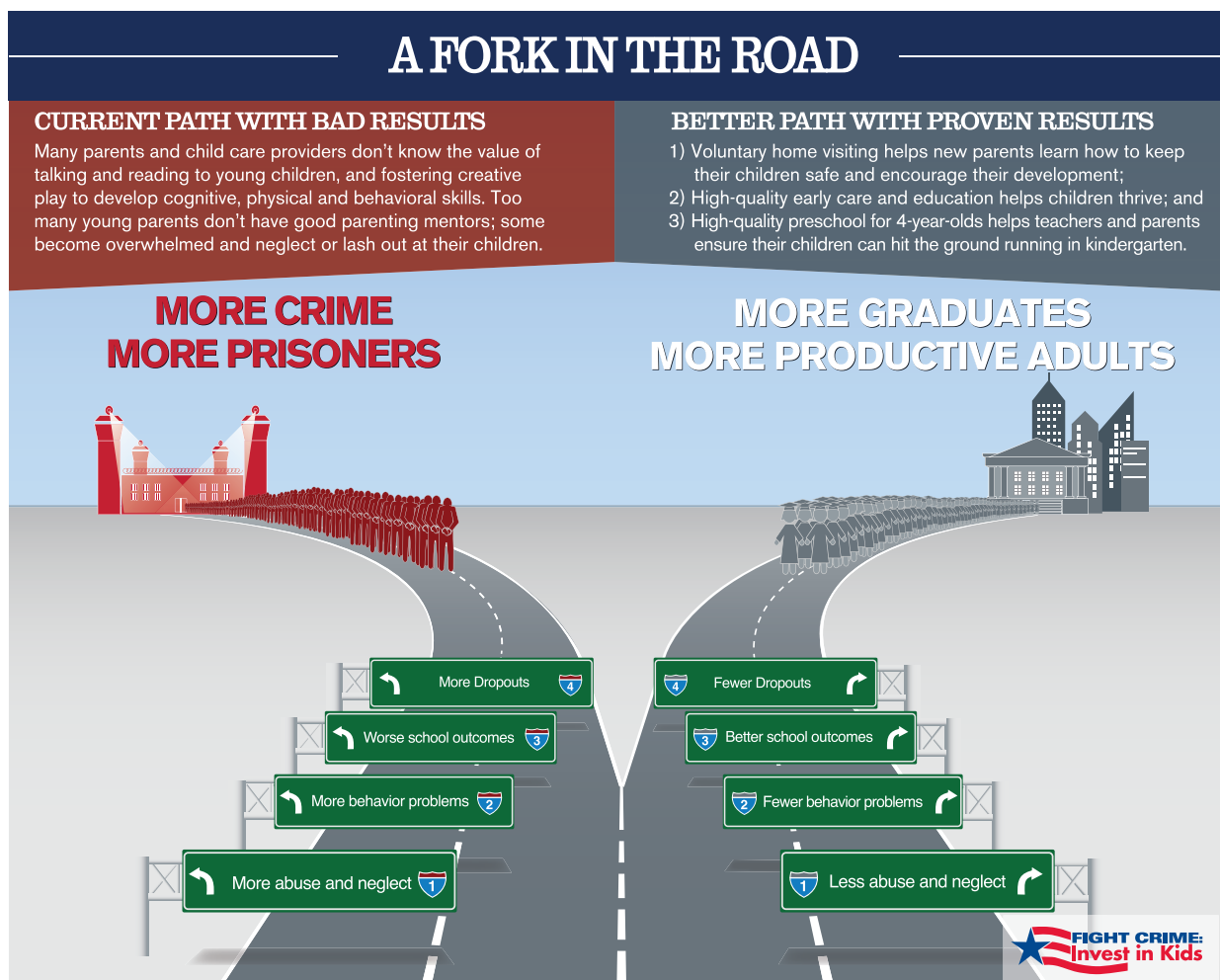
Rate of Return



behind in vocabulary development, but on pre-literacy and pre-math skills (such as knowing their alphabet or being able to count to ten), as well. Many also face challenges in learning to control impulses and behavior so they can get along with other students and teachers.

James Heckman, the Nobel-winning economist from the University of Chicago, has conducted groundbreaking work with

economists, statisticians and neuroscientists and has proven that the quality of early childhood development strongly influences health, social and economic outcomes. He argues that we should invest sufficiently in younger children and in coaching their parents because those early investments will generate the greatest return. But the opposite is happening: we actually spend far less on younger children than on older children and adults.⁹



THE PATHWAY TO LESS CRIME

The path we set children upon, in their earliest years, can make a huge difference as they proceed through school and beyond. Research has shown that high-quality early education and care from birth through preschool will result in more successful outcomes:

Less abuse and neglect:

- The Nurse-Family Partnership is a nationwide voluntary home visiting program. The Chicago Child-Parent Center (CPC) is a preschool program that has served over 100,000 children and followed them up to age 28.

Both programs coach parents to help them understand their children's health needs, create safer home environments and develop parenting skills.

Both approaches cut child abuse and neglect in half for the children served, compared to similar children from families not being helped.¹⁰

2 Fewer behavior problems:

Pennsylvania's Pre-K Counts program cut the portion of children at risk for problematic social and self-control behavior (such as taking things from others or not waiting your turn) from 22 percent to 4 percent.¹¹

3 Better school outcomes:

- Ready for school: Boston's universal preschool program improved mathematics, literacy and language skills among participating children equivalent to seven months of additional learning, compared to children who did not attend.¹² State preschool programs are also reporting important improvements.¹³

Omaha's Educare early childhood education program has also shown promising results. An evaluation of the program found that children who had been in Educare for three or more years had an average score of 96 on a standard vocabulary test they took before starting kindergarten, a full 20 points higher than the children who had been in the program less than one year.

- Less special education: Pennsylvania's pre-k program's success in helping children learn self-control indicates fewer of those children will need special education. New Jersey, which has followed its children through the 4th and 5th grades, found that the children served were 31 percent less likely to be placed in special education than a control group.¹⁴
- Not held back in school: Participants in Michigan's state preschool, the Great Start Readiness Program, were held back in school 51 percent less often than non-participants.¹⁵ Children served in Tennessee's preschool program were half as likely to be held back in kindergarten.¹⁶ New Jersey's preschool program found its children were held back 40 percent less often.¹⁷ A home visiting program, Healthy Families New York, cut first grade retention rates by half.¹⁸
- Ahead in reading and math with no "fade-out": North Carolina's Smart Start and More at Four initiatives to improve early education found that the children in

counties that invested more in these efforts were five months ahead in reading at third grade and three to five months ahead in math by third grade when compared to children in counties that invested less.¹⁹

New Jersey's preschool program, which served disadvantaged school districts statewide, reported that participating children were three-fourths of a year ahead in math and two-thirds of a year ahead in literacy in 4th and 5th grades.²⁰

These findings show that academic benefits from high-quality preschool need not "fade out." The New Jersey researchers report that their findings are on par with the earlier results achieved by Chicago's CPC program, which later went on to achieve very strong graduation and crime reduction outcomes.

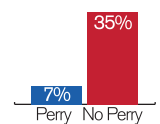
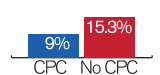
4 Fewer drop-outs:

- The Chicago CPC preschool program reported a 29 percent increase in high school graduation rates by age 20 among its participants.²¹
- Michigan's Great Start Readiness program reported a 35 percent increase in graduates,²² and
- The Perry Preschool Program saw a 44 percent increase in graduation rates by age 40.²³

In Nebraska, 12 percent of high school students still fail to graduate on time, and of those who did graduate and try to join the military, 15 percent were unable to pass the military's entrance exam.²⁴

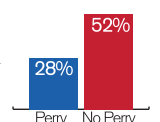
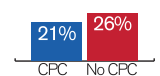
5 Less crime:

- Children not served by the Chicago CPC program were 70 percent more likely to be arrested for a violent crime by age 18.²⁵
- By age 27, children not served by the Perry Preschool Program were five times more likely to be chronic offenders with five or more arrests.²⁶



6 Fewer prisoners:

- By age 24, the people served by the Chicago CPC were 20 percent less likely to have served time in a jail or prison.²⁷
- By age 40, the children served by the Perry Preschool program were 46 percent less likely to have been sentenced to prison or jail.²⁸



It All Adds Up

No baby is destined, at birth, to become a criminal. The road to criminal behavior is paved with childhood abuse and neglect, inadequate preparation for school, unaddressed behavior problems, poor academic performance and dropping out of high school. The path to success in life is driven by school readiness, the ability to get along with others, academic achievement and high school graduation. We need to take action, right now, to ensure children have the opportunity for quality early education and care so they are on the right path for life.

No Excuses

Results from New Jersey, North Carolina and Michigan should effectively end the debate on whether high-quality state early childhood efforts can be brought to scale and deliver strong and lasting results. If Nebraska's state preschool program or Head Start programs aren't achieving meaningful and lasting results, such as reductions in children's behavior problems or improved

In its 2014 budget, Nebraska increased funding for preschool by \$3.2 million.

math and literacy skills, the program administrators need to find out what the successful programs are doing differently. Steve Barnett, the Director of the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), argues that "an accountability and continuous improvement system is a prerequisite for quality, as is adequate funding for those being held accountable."²⁹ Administrators

of our most successful state preschool programs take nothing for granted and are constantly working to learn from each other and make improvements. Nebraska's preschool program meets six of the ten quality benchmarks established by NIEER and spends two-thirds of what NIEER projects is probably necessary to fund high-quality programs, given the likely costs in Nebraska. As Nebraska looks to expand its efforts it also needs to ensure that its programs have adequate funding and are following the successful approaches that will ensure high quality, while measuring results so it can continually strive to attain even greater results going forward.³⁰ That is how Nebraska will reap the rewards of effective preschool programs.

Support for Preschool Across America and Across the Political Divide

Twenty-Five Examples of Bipartisan Support

 AL \$9.4M	 CA \$25M						 CO \$10M	 GA \$13M						
 HI \$6.4M	 MA \$26M*	 MI \$65M					 MN \$40M	 MO	 MS \$3M					
 MT \$1M	 NC \$12.4M	 ND	 NE \$5M	 NJ \$14.4M	 NM \$16.5M	 NY \$25M	 OH \$12M	 OR \$6M	 PA \$4.5M	 RI \$0.5M	 SC \$26M	 VA \$5M	 WA \$22.4M	 WV TBD*

Note: MA: \$26.5 increase primarily for childcare; preschool funding increase failed. WV: Education bill passed establishing universal preschool by 2016; however funding not yet determined.

States Know Early Learning Works

States recognize the benefits of high-quality early learning programs. In the past decade, the percentage of four-year-olds served in state preschool doubled, from 14 to 28 percent.³¹ In Nebraska, the total percentage of four-year-olds served has increased in the past decade, going from 3 percent in 2003 to 26 percent in 2013.

Preschool has received support from both sides of the aisle. In 2013, at least 25 states, more than half of them with Republican leadership, proposed and/or signed into law expansions of preschool.³² This trend continues in 2014, with increases for preschool funding passed in Alabama, California, Connecticut, Maine, Michigan, New York, Ohio, and Vermont, with other states having proposals being considered.

In 2013, Nebraska served 26 percent of its four-year-olds and spent \$13 million (combined with federal and local contributions, that equaled an average of \$2,943 per child). [See *The State of Preschool in America, 2013*, by the National Institute for Early Education Research, for more state information.³³] In its 2014 budget, Nebraska increased funding for preschool by \$3.2 million.³⁴

Increasing graduation rates decreases serious crime

University of California at Berkeley economist Enrico Moretti and Canadian economist Lance Lochner studied the relationship over time between changes in graduation rates and crime. They concluded that a 10 percentage point increase in graduation rates – going from 50 percent to 60 percent, for example – reduces murder and assault rates by about 20 percent.

Source: Lochner & Moretti (2004) *The American Economic Review*



Stronger parents

The most successful early education and care programs with long-term results—such as the Perry Preschool, CPC, New Jersey’s state preschool and the Nurse-Family Partnership—work with parents to teach them how to reinforce positive behaviors and encourage them to routinely read and speak to their children, so they are better prepared for success in the years to come.

A well-respected, independent cost-benefit analysis of more than 20 different studies of preschool programs showed that preschool can return, on average, a “profit” (economic benefits minus costs) to society of nearly \$25,000 for every child served.³⁶ Other estimates are much higher. Clearly, preschool works and more than pays for itself.

A Different Path for Our State

Our members make no apologies for putting criminals behind bars in Nebraska. But we all agree that a better and less expensive way going forward is to prevent as many young children as possible from growing up to become involved in crime.

If Nebraska invests wisely now in more and better early learning opportunities for its disadvantaged children, thousands of children can become successful, productive adults, instead of individuals who too often fail themselves and cost taxpayers dearly. When we support what works for our disadvantaged children, we put them – and our state – on a different, safer path. It’s time to do what works, Nebraska.

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