

## Sample Op-Ed on the President's Early Learning Proposal

*How to use this Op-Ed:*

- *Make it your own! Here are some suggestions that could make your Op-Ed more powerful by giving it a more local feel:*
  - o *Mention a local high-quality program*
  - o *Use a local news hook (e.g. PreK graduation, field trip taken by a program, high profile visit to a program)*
  - o *Add in state-specific facts*
  - o *Use a title that has local relevance*
- *Do not feel limited by the approach or scope of this Op-Ed, elaborate or cut down as you see fit.*
- *We've suggested places where you can add statistics – some states have more statistics available than others, so this may not be possible for your state.*

Far too many children in (INSERT STATE) show up on the first day of kindergarten already behind their peers. Many of them never catch up. (In (INSERT YEAR) alone, (INSERT RELEVANT STATE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT STAT)). This has devastating consequences for the children themselves as well as our nation as a whole. Fortunately, it's clear what we need to do to: invest in high-quality early care and education in the years before kindergarten. And that's exactly what the President's early learning plan will do.

The President proposes to expand access to high-quality prekindergarten to all four-year-olds, starting with children from low- and moderate-income families. It would also increase the availability of early learning opportunities for infants and toddlers through partnerships between Early Head Start and child care that meet high standards, and expand voluntary home visiting programs that offer support and resources to vulnerable families with young children.

This plan builds on the long-standing role states have played in providing prekindergarten. For decades, under both Republican and Democratic governors, states have made substantial investments in prekindergarten. In 2012, 40 states (INCLUDING (YOUR STATE IF RELEVANT)) funded prekindergarten programs, but they served only a fraction of four-year-olds and even fewer three-year-olds. State prekindergarten funding and enrollment have stalled or declined in recent years and many states fail to set adequate quality standards for their prekindergarten programs. Under the President's Preschool for All proposal, the federal government would partner with states--giving them incentives to extend their prekindergarten programs to more

children and strengthen the quality of these programs. (CUSTOMIZE THIS PARAGRAPH USING THE ADDENDUM)

Prekindergarten is one of the best investments our country can make. Research demonstrates that the benefits of high-quality prekindergarten greatly exceed the costs. According to numerous studies of small- and large-scale programs, children who participate are more likely to perform well on tests in elementary and secondary school, graduate from high school and have secure employment as adults.

By setting children on a clear path toward success in school and life, early education benefits these children while bolstering our entire nation's economy by building a robust workforce for the future. High-quality early care and education also enable parents to work more productively knowing that their children are in safe and nurturing environments.

An investment in early education is crucial for our children, our families, and our nation. It's time to invest in our children from the start and drive the President's proposal forward now.

***Addendum: Optional additions to insert, depending on state circumstances:***

*If your state has a prekindergarten program:* The President's plan will allow us to strengthen and expand our current prekindergarten program so that more children can benefit and the benefits can be even greater. (Refer to [NIEER State Preschool Yearbook](#) for areas of improvement for your state, such as low percentage of children served, quality benchmarks not met, any decrease in total spending or spending per child enrolled, etc.)

*If your state has no prekindergarten program:* The President's plan provides a key incentive to our state leaders to start investing in prekindergarten. It's not acceptable that we remain one of the few states without a prekindergarten program.

*If your state is expanding early education investments:* We hope that national leaders will follow our state's lead in recognizing the importance of early education. Our state's investment of \$XX for early education this year will allow YY [more] children to participate in this new [expanded] program. (Add specifics about your state's new or expanded funding or initiative.)