What if Children Had a Right to Good Pre-K?

Steve Barnett, NIEER, Rutgers University
Half of all young children are low income, ¼ are poor. Most lack access to high quality pre-K.
Can High Quality UPK Dramatically Decrease Inequality and Raise Average Achievement?
High Quality UPK Effects on Black-White Gaps

Estimated reduction in kindergarten math and reading achievement gaps between African American and white students, in months

Math
Reduction after UPK: 45%
8.9
4.9

Reading
Reduction after UPK: 98%
6.7
0.1

https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education/report/2016/04/05/132750/how-much-can-high-quality-universal-pre-k-reduce-achievement-gaps/
High Quality UPK Effects on Hispanic-White Gaps

Estimated reduction in kindergarten math and reading achievement gaps between Hispanic and white students, in months

- **Math**
  - Reduction after UPK: 78%
  - Gaps in months: 10.8
  - Reduction after UPK: 106%
  - Gaps in months: 11.5

- **Reading**
  - Gaps in months: 2.4
  - Gaps in months: 0.7

https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education/report/2016/04/05/132750/how-much-can-high-quality-universal-pre-k-reduce-achievement-gaps/
High Quality UK Effects on Income Gaps

Reduction in kindergarten math and reading achievement gaps between low-income and higher-income students, in months

Reduction after UPK: **27%**
- Math: Reduction from 11.2 to 8.2 months
- Reading: Reduction from 13.0 to 7.7 months

Reduction after UPK: **41%**
- Math: Reduction from 11.2 to 8.2 months
- Reading: Reduction from 13.0 to 7.7 months

Pre-K Quality Standards

Where you live matters!

Washington DC

No Program
0-3 Benchmarks
4-6 Benchmarks
7-9 Benchmarks
10 Benchmarks
KEY CHALLENGES FOR FLORIDA

1. Funding per child is low—$2300—less than ½ national average and near last

2. Quality standards are low—last place

3. Accountability based on child testing system that is arbitrary & weak

4. Continuous improvement systems?

5. Integration of child care, Head Start, VPK, and public schools?
### Other States to Look to for Quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Enrolled</th>
<th>Qual Stds</th>
<th>$/ Child</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AL</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$6,700</td>
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<tr>
<td>NC</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>OK</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$7,800</td>
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<tr>
<td>WVA</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$9,900</td>
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<td>NJ Abbott</td>
<td>&gt;90%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>$13,300</td>
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What is Required for High Quality?

- High expectations
- Strong teachers
- Rich curriculum
- Small classes
- Knowledgeable leaders
- Continuous improvement
- Adequate funding
Continuous Improvement Cycle

Develop Early Learning and Program Standards

- Measure and Assess Progress
- Implement/Pilot Improvements
- Analyze and Plan

Develop Early Learning and Program Standards
NJ Effects on Achievement Grades 4 and 5

- LAL 4th: .12
- LAL 5th: .18
- Math 4th: .17
- Math 5th: .14
- Science 4th: .37

Colors represent:
- Blue: 1 year Abbott pre-k
- Red: 2 year Abbott pre-k
NJ Effects on Retention & Special Education at Grade 5

Retention
- Abbott pre-K: 12%
- no Abbott pre-K: 19%

Special Education
- Abbott pre-K: 12%
- no Abbott pre-K: 17%
High quality pre-K for all would raise achievement, increase earnings, decrease inequality & improve the lives of the next generation