

Cutting Pre-kindergarten Will Increase Crime in New York

A Research Brief by FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS *NEW YORK*

This brief is based on a report by FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS and Harvard physicians T. Berry Brazelton and Joshua Sparrow; City University of New York criminologist Eli Silverman; Police Chiefs Larry K. Preston (Waverly) and James Russo (Hempstead); Rensselaer County Sheriff Daniel V. Keating; and FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS Research Analysis Director A. Cate Miller and New York State Director Meredith S. Wiley. FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS is an anti-crime organization of over 2,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, and victims of violence nationwide, including 134 in New York State. The full report and citations for this brief are available at www.fightcrime.org.

State funding proposals currently under consideration would cut over \$211 million from New York State pre-kindergarten programs. These cuts would move New York in exactly the wrong direction, and could result in higher crime costs and in almost 20,000 more crimes by the time the children who would be served reach the age of 18. The state government should increase funding so all families have access to programs that research shows will result in lower crime and drug use, higher graduation rates and fewer families receiving welfare.

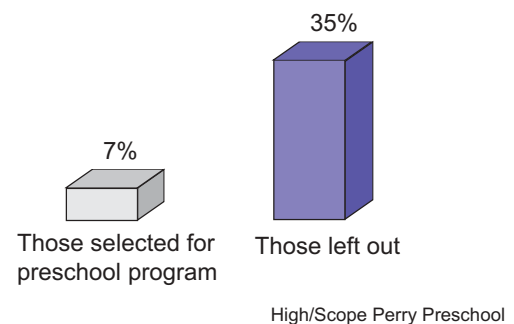
Quality Pre-kindergarten Cuts Crime

Research shows that quality programs, especially for at-risk children, can change the course of their lives. For example, children from low-income families who were randomly assigned at ages three and four to participate in the High/Scope Perry Preschool program in Michigan were five times less likely than children left out of the program to become chronic lawbreakers as adults. Chicago's federally-funded Child-Parent Centers have served 100,000 three- and four-year-olds since 1967. Research shows that similar children from low-income neighborhoods were 70 percent more likely to have been arrested for a violent crime by age 18 than those who attended the program. This program will have prevented an estimated 33,000 crimes by the time the children who have been served reach the age of 18.

Quality Pre-kindergarten Cuts Future Crime

At-risk 3 & 4 year olds randomly excluded from the High/Scope Perry Preschool program were five times more likely to become chronic offenders (more than 4 arrests) by age 27.

Chronic Lawbreakers at Age 27



Children Denied Services

New York's children, especially those most at-risk, are already severely underserved. Universal Pre-kindergarten (UPK) currently serves only 25 percent of four-year-old children in New York State. Proposed cuts would leave even more children without the services they need. The state legislature is now considering a proposal by Governor George Pataki to eliminate all funding for the \$204 million UPK, which would leave 60,000 additional four-year-olds without services. The Governor also proposed cutting \$7.5 million in funding from the Experimental Pre-kindergarten program, which provides services to disadvantaged three- and four-year-olds. If the proposed cuts are passed, thousands of New York's children will be denied services that have been proven to help them avoid a life of crime, graduate from high school and become responsible citizens.

The Impact of Cutting Pre-kindergarten: Up to 20,000 Crimes

Eliminating New York's pre-kindergarten programs would be a very costly mistake. If the programs are achieving results similar to those of the Chicago Child-Parent Center, eliminating them could result in almost 20,000 crimes by the time the children who would be served in the 2003-2004 school year are 18 years old. As a result of this increase in crime, taxpayers could face \$588 million in net additional expenses instead of an initial savings of \$204 million from cutting the program. Each additional year without pre-kindergarten would bring added costs, with more kids held back, more kids in special education, and more people becoming crime victims.

Need and Costs for Pre-kindergarten and Early Childhood Programs are Rising

Fifty-four percent of children under age six in New York have both parents, or their only parent, in the workforce. Most children under six are in the care of someone other than their parents during the work day. The only question is whether they are in “child storage” (for instance, parked in front of a TV set) or in quality programs that help them learn to get along with others and start school ready to succeed.

Many parents cannot afford the cost of quality services. Tuition in a child care center in New York averages \$8,299 annually for a four-year-old—more than twice the average cost of public university tuition. At that cost, preschool for two children can exceed \$16,500—\$6,300 more than a full-time, minimum-wage earner makes yearly. Many parents cannot pay this any more than they could pay private school tuition if public schools closed. State funding is essential if children are to be given a good start in life, and if society is to avoid increased crime as these children grow into adulthood.

Investments that Save Money

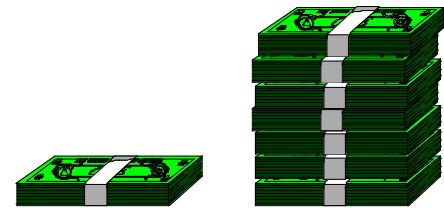
The High/Scope Perry Preschool program cut crime, welfare and other costs so much that it saved more than \$7 (including more than \$6 in crime savings) for every \$1 invested. A study of the Chicago Child-Parent Centers also showed savings of \$7 for every \$1 invested (with taxpayers alone saving almost \$3 for every \$1 invested). Dr. Steven Barnett, Director of the National Institute for Early Education Research, estimated that the cost to society of failing to provide at least two years of quality early childhood care and education to low-income children is approximately \$100,000 per child, totaling about \$27.4 billion for all poor children in New York now under five. Failing to invest in quality pre-kindergarten programs squanders billions.

Law Enforcement is United

The members of FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS *NEW YORK* are determined to put dangerous criminals behind bars. However, those on the front lines in the fight against crime also know that the most powerful weapons against crime are investments like pre-kindergarten that help kids get the right start in life. In response to a George Mason University survey, an overwhelming 74 percent of New York law enforcement leaders chose providing “more after-school programs and educational child care programs” as the most effective strategy for reducing youth violence and crime. Many respondents favored adopting more than one strategy, and a majority ranked hiring more police officers as the second most effective approach. The New York State Association of Chiefs of Police and New York State Sheriffs’ Association have endorsed investments in quality pre-kindergarten and child care programs as have national law enforcement organizations such as the Fraternal Order of Police and the National District Attorneys Association. It is time to invest in the programs that are proven to save money and cut crime.

Quality Pre-kindergarten Saves Money

Taxpayers, victims, and participants saved over \$700 for every \$100 invested in the Chicago Child-Parent Centers pre-kindergarten program.

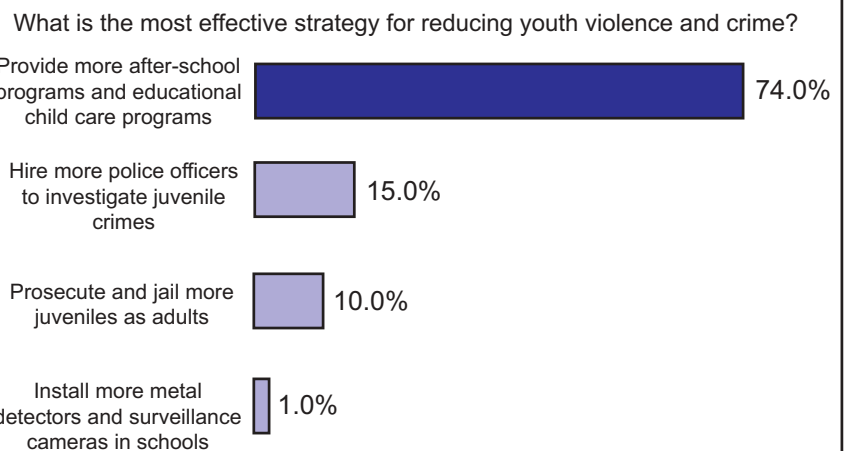


For every \$100
Invested

Over \$700 was
saved

Child-Parent Centers

New York Law Enforcement Leaders Say Pre-kindergarten and After-School Programs Reduce Youth Violence and Crime



New York Law Enforcement Leadership Survey, 2000.

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Endnotes

- Quality Early Childhood Programs Cut Crime

Schweinhart, L.J., Barnes, H.V., & Weikart, D.P. (1993). *Significant benefits: The High/Scope Perry Preschool study through age 27*. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press.

Reynolds, A.J. et al. (2001). Long-term effects of an early childhood intervention on educational achievement and juvenile arrest. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 285(12), 2339-2380.

- Children Denied Services

Ewen, D., & Hart, K. (2003). *State budget cuts create a growing child care crisis for low-income working families* [On-line]. Available: http://www.childrensdefense.org/pdf/state_budget_cuts_2003.pdf

The percentage of 4-year-old children in NY State that are served by UPK was computed by dividing the number of children served in 2003 (n=59,670) by the number of 4-year-old children in NY State (n=258,578). For number of children served by UPK see: Winning Beginning New York. (2003). Key facts: About the elimination of early childhood education programs in New York State [On-line]. Available: <http://www.winningbeginningny.org/databank/databank.html>. For number of 4-year-old children in NY State see: Children's Defense Fund. (2003). *2000 census of population, summary file 1: Count of persons under age 25 by single year of age* [On-line]. Available: http://www.childrensdefense.org/fs_census2000_pop.htm

- Cutting Pre-kindergarten means New Yorkers Could Face More Crime

Like those in the Chicago Child-Parent Center (CPC) study, the children currently attending New York's Universal Pre-kindergarten are from economically disadvantaged families. The crime projections from the CPC study were applied to the 60,000 participants in NY's Universal Pre-kindergarten as follows: 33,000 crimes per 100,000 CPC children is equivalent to 19,800 crimes per 60,000 NY Pre-kindergarten children; 13,000 violent crimes per 100,000 CPC children is equivalent to 7,800 violent crimes per 60,000 NY Pre-kindergarten children. Returns to the government equaled \$2.88 for every dollar invested in the CPC study. Multiplying the government's investment of \$204 million by \$2.88 yields \$588 million in potential return to the government (or potential loss should the investment not be made).

- Need and Costs for Pre-kindergarten and Early Childhood Programs are Rising

Children's Defense Fund. (2003). *Children in the states 2003: New York state profile* [On-line]. Available: <http://www.childrensdefense.org/statesdata.htm>

National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Associations, & New York Child Care Resource and Referral Network. (2003). *2003 child care in the state of: New York* [On-line]. Available: <http://www.nysccrc.org>

American Association of State Colleges and Universities, & National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges. (2003). *Student charges and financial aid: 2002-2003*. Washington, DC: American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

U.S. Department of Labor. (2003). *Minimum wage laws in the states* [On-line]. Available: <http://www.dol.gov/esa/minwage/america.htm>

- Investments that Save Money

Barnett, S.W. (1993). Cost benefit analysis. In L.J. Schweinhart, H. V. Barnes, & D. P. Weikart (Eds.), *Significant benefits: The High/Scope Perry Preschool study through age 27* (pp. 143-173). Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press.

Reynolds, A. J. et al. (February, 2002). *Age 21 cost-benefit analysis of the Title I Chicago Child-Parent Centers*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Society for Prevention Research, Washington, DC.

Barnett, W. S. (1995). Long-term effects of early childhood programs on cognitive and school outcomes. *The Future of Children: Long-term Outcomes of Early Childhood Programs*, 5(3), 25-50.

The cost of failing to provide at least two years of early childhood education services to low-income children in New York was computed by multiplying Dr. Steven Barnett's estimated figure of \$100,000 per child by the number of children in New York who are under the age of 5 and living in poverty (n=274,057). For the latter, see U.S. Census Bureau. (2002). *State estimates for people under age 5 in Poverty for US: 1999* [On-line]. Available:http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/saie/stcty/e99_00.htm

- Law Enforcement is United

Mastrofski, S.D., & Keeter, S. (2000). *Survey of New York law enforcement leaders on reducing school and youth violence (Police chiefs, district attorneys, and sheriffs)*. Washington, DC: George Mason University.